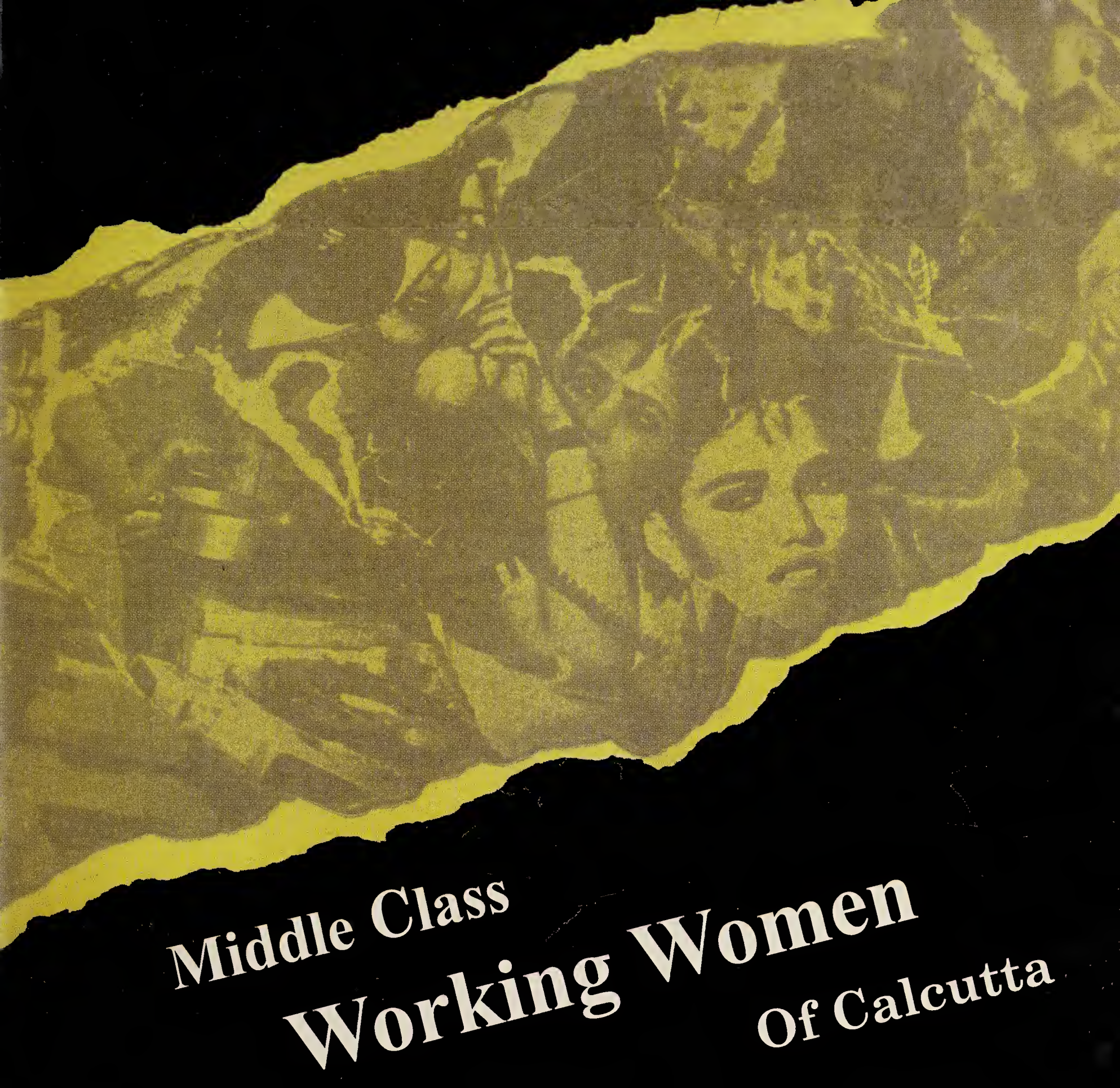

Middle Class Working Women Of Calcutta

Bharati Debi

ABOUT THE BOOK

Many scholars have concerned themselves with the problems of working women. The author of this volume, Dr. (Smt.) Bharati Debi, has also involved in studying the problem. Her study differs from others, to be accredited as being the first anthropological attempt in addressing this topical field. It is based on data generated through the first hand research investigation designed and accomplished meaningfully.

This microstudy harps on the intimate problems of working women like work, working environment, home, family, interpersonal relationship, status, etc. By so doing, it tries to assess the role of working women that swings between the two diametrically opposite poles, poles, of home and work. How skillfully and harmoniously they are attempting to synthesize these two roles, striking a balance between change and continuity, has been highlighted through the study.

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MIDDLE CLASS WORKING WOMAN OF CALCUTTA

MIDDLE CLASS WORKING WOMEN OF CALCUTTA

A STUDY IN CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

BHARATI DEBI

ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
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To the memory of my husband

BENOY BHUSAN CHAKRABORTY

(1938—1984)

FOREWORD

This account on continuity and change of the middle class working women of Calcutta is based on the data generated through first hand research investigation carried out by Dr Bharati Debi during 1974-75. She has interviewed 424 working women belonging to three occupational categories, namely teachers, office workers, and technical personnel of Calcutta city. The author began with the working hypothesis that gainful employment of women outside home brings forth a series of change in their family composition, inter-personal relationship and economic roles that in turn results in concomitant change of status of women. Information gathered through a partly structured and partly open-ended questionnaire have been analysed and interpreted with an appreciable degree of success in the three chapters on Women at Work, Women at Home, and Women at two Situations. The resultant processes, that determine the status of women, have been dealt with and summed up in another chapter bearing a similar title. Besides, with an introductory essay and some attempt for generalization, the *Middle Class Working Women of Calcutta* presents a fairly intimate picture about transformation process that the status of women has undergone over the periods of history.

The level of progress of a society, particularly one among those, who belong to the post-agricultural phase, is sometimes measured in terms of the degree of emancipation enjoyed by women of that society. But an exercise of this kind ordinarily is bound to raise many more questions than what it can possibly answer, since women as such cannot be considered as a homogenous social/cultural category. In view of this fact, Dr Bharati Debi's specific reference to the women of a definable socio-economic class speaks of her discretion in the research strategy.

It is by now well-known that education as well as economic emancipation have positive association with status of women, since the former has influence upon the nature of gainful employment of women outside home. To what extent such exposures and consequent attainment of status could free women from their responsibilities at the domestic front is a very crucial issue and Dr Bharati Debi dealt with the matter quite extensively. Nevertheless, since the middle class in all societies are by and large found to have a general inclination toward striking a delicate balance between the apparently opposed tendencies of subscription to modernity and tradition, the middle class women of Calcutta are no exceptions in this respect. The author, besides highlighting those tendencies, also tried to pin-point the areas where the middle class women, according to her assessment, have experienced maximum difficulty in crossing the threshold.

There could be some disagreements with the author about her nature of delineation of the middle class as such. But since that is primarily the matter of operational definition in a given context, that does not in any way reflect upon the value of this first-hand account on the subject about which so little is known. Dr Bharati Debi deserves our appreciation for making this valuable contribution.

AJIT K. DANDA

PREFACE

The genesis of this study goes way back to a little more than a decade ago when I was a daily passenger for attending office from a suburban station of the Eastern Railway. I used to board a compartment, reserved for ladies. Until the destination was reached everyday, to and fro, I had to be confined completely within the world of women alone. During that time, obviously, I had to react to the discussions, mentally, of course, that centred round more commonly with the tiring plight of the working women. The discussions were unsystematic, hovering on many of the then current affairs, but mostly ended up with the difficulties that they were to face everyday in managing the two vital fronts of their life. These related precisely to the problems of balancing the situations at home and at work. Unconsciously, however, the problem brewed in my mind, provocating me, as an anthropologist, to take up a study, if opportunity comes. It came fortunately, and I consciously plunged myself into the world and the problems of the working women. I worked on it faithfully and systematically, formulating an empirical and analytical study, under the auspices of the Anthropological Survey of India, which earned for me a Ph. D. degree of the Calcutta University.

This study may be considered as a microstudy, focussing on the problems of middle class working women of Calcutta. It, however, in any way, does not claim to view the whole in the larger context of a comprehensive macrostudy. Rather it looks at women through the perspective of their work and specifically seeks to determine how they function as agents of tradition and change, as well as how continuity and change affect them.

To name all the individuals, including my working women informants, who rendered a whole hearted support to see that this work takes a fruitful shape, will make a long list. I refrain from doing this, but I sincerely render my deep sense of gratitude to all of them.

The project was assigned to me on the eve of the International Women's Year by the Director, Anthropological Survey of India. I, therefore, feel particularly indebted to the Director, Anthropological Survey of India, for the opportunity and facilities given for the completion of the study. In this connection, I must make it very clear that the interpretations drawn upon and the views presented here are entirely mine; onus should not, naturally, lie with others.

Let me now set down my personal obligations to those who were particularly helpful in some very special way.

In the area of academic sphere, I owe a very special debt of gratitude to Prof. N. C. Chowdhury of the Department of Sociology and Cultural Anthropology, North Bengal University, who very kindly acted as my supervisor for the Ph. D. dissertation. Dr. Pratap C. Dutta is rather a category of his own. Not only he took an abiding interest in my work but also stimulated my enthusiasm for carrying out the research work, since its inception through the completion of the project.

Dr. A. K. Danda, Director, Anthropological Survey of India, has obliged me by writing a foreword of this small volume.

I would also like to record my sincere gratitude to Dr. A. Basu, Dr. S. B. Nandi, Dr. B. C. Roychowdhury, Dr. P. K. Dasgupta, Dr. B. K. Dasgupta, Dr. D. P. Mukherjee, Dr. (Mrs) Jyoti Sen, Dr. S. B. Chakrabarti, Sri T. N. Pandit for rendering valuable suggestions at many crucial times.

I am indebted to my good friend Shri A. P. Nandan for his much needed assistance at all stages of the work.

I wish to record my gratefulness to Sri M. M. Das of the Publication Section for his overall supervision in printing the book and particularly to Shri Pijush Kanti Mukherjee for care and pain he took in bringing out this volume.

I am thankful to Sri Jayanta Acharyya of the Camellia Advertising Services, Calcutta-6, for appropriately conceiving and nicely designing the dust jacket of this volume.

Last but not the least, I owe a great deal to my husband, Late Benoy Bhusan Chakraborty, not only for his fullest support and confidence in me, but also for his valuable cooperation and unfailing encouragement.

It would be sheer injustice if I don't express thanks to my two little daughters, Bhaswati and Shaswati. They not only patiently shared my anxiety during the past few years, but also were keen in asking me regularly, Mam, when the study would see the light of the day. They must now be feeling happy with me.

Calcutta, The 16th November, 1988 — BHARATI DEBI

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

BACKGROUND AND THE EARLIER STUDIES

The relationship between man and employment is rather obvious and clear. Throughout history he has mostly been looked upon as the sole bread earner. Society has, therefore, necessarily expected of him to make provision for himself and for his family as well. The expectation on woman, on the other hand, has been altogether of a different nature. Instead of bread earner, society has fixed her role as a mere helpmate to the bread earner.

Since society itself is dynamic, because of its evolution from a simple to a more complex form, changes in it have been irresistible through time. Admittedly, the pace, course and direction of changes, which are still on-going, vary depending upon the nature of needs of a given society. It could unmistakably be identified by now that the gamut of change has been in all directions, hitherto perhaps unconceived by any spate of imagination. It is more so particularly at the political, economic and socio-cultural levels.

One of the most remarkable and directional changes that has given a real thrust to many a societies is the emancipation of woman. Her emergence from exclusive seclusion within home to work outside the four walls of house has amounted almost to a silent social revolution. In Europe, for example, upsurge of women gained ground along with the advance of the Industrial Revolution. In the Indian societies, the emancipation of women appeared a little belated. It is only after the First World War that women in India could have had the opportunity of availing themselves of tasting the fervour of changes.

With the attainment of Independence in 1947, the socio-economic transformations in Indian societies have brought about a train of perceptible changes. It has specifically affected the status, outlook, world view and the attitude of Indian women.

Changed socio-economic conditions in post-Independence India have gradually made it imperative for women, especially those belonging to the

middle class, to apply their mind seriously for taking up gainful employment outside home. By that they virtually need encroaching largely upon the preserves of men.

The situation that emerged due to the partition of India had brought with urgency the need for women to step out and seek jobs. According to the estimates available from the *Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India* (1974), it may be noted that more and more women are being absorbed in the public and private sectors. They are mostly employed as typists, stenographers, clerks, teachers, physicians and surgeons, nurses and allied technicians, and other qualified scientists. In relation to men, their employment rate in some of the selected occupational categories are as follows :

Physicians and Surgeons	...	7.1 per cent
Lawyers	...	1.2 „
Teachers	...	30.3 „
Nursing and Health technicians	...	72.2 „
Scientists	...	10.9 „

Today, as we could witness, women have become breadwinners, although of a different kind. But, at the same time, they are grappled with many hazards and more problems.

Consequent upon taking up jobs outside home, the responsibilities of women have doubtless increased. This, in turn, has affected their outlook and world view. Categorically speaking, two clear-cut and distinct roles —one concerning home and the other connected with job—have put the working womenfolk in a dilemma. These two roles are undoubtedly diametrically opposite in nature and put one in a challenging situation to strike a balance between duties at home and that at the place of work. This is the most practical and immediate problem for working women. How they remain steadfast, adaptable and, at the same time, pliable in settling the matter is an issue which demands an empirical and analytical study.

Millions of words have already been spent touching upon many and varied problems of modern women. The new freedom that women have gained through cultural change has broadened their social horizon more than what they had earlier being a traditional wife-homemaker-mother. The broader aspects of change, mainly concerning various socio-psychological aspects, have been focussed by a host of investigators, both from India and from abroad. Notable are the work of eminent scholars like, among others, Chandrakala A. Hate (1930, 1948, 1969), K. T. Merchant (1935), Henry A. Bowman (1954), K. M. Kapadia (1954, 1955, 1958, 1959),

Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein (1956), Neera A. Desai (1957), Francis Lomas Feldman (1958), Aileen D. Ross (1959, 1961), Padmini Sengupta (1960, 1974), S. C. Dube (1963), William J. Goode (1965), Amarjit Mahajan (1966), Promilla Kapur (1970, 1973, 1974), P. Ramachandran and S. N. Ranade (1970), A. S. Altekar (1973), Pratima Asthana (1974), Tara Ali Baig (1976), Elise Boulding (1977), Promilla Kalhan (1977), Girija Khanna and M. A. Verghese (1978).

Myrdal and Klein (1956), while trying to evaluate the situation of working women in European countries, have rightly stressed that taking up gainful employment is no longer a matter to be much bothered about. There, in Europe, the question whether one should go for a job does not arise at all. The only concern in the case is how to maintain harmony between the functions at the two fronts, home and work outside. The pull in these two directions, however, haunts one practically throughout her own life. This characteristic feminine dilemma has thus been aptly phrased by Myrdal and Klein as "Career and Family".

Bowman (1954), in course of his analysis on data relating to marriage and working women, feels that the working women have increasingly been burdened with varied responsibilities. These become at times complex, and sometimes pose perplexing problems of setting appropriate goals for establishing their own identity as women.

In another study on family, Goode (1965) has viewed that previously, at the turn of the century, only a few women took up jobs excepting those who had been so destined by poverty. But the situation has since been changed. And he says that women are now coming in increasing numbers to take up jobs, for they want to work or, otherwise, trying to raise the standard of living. Goode observes that women gain a greater amount of satisfaction through job.

Yet in another occasion, Feldman (1958), in a conference on "Women Power", has described the middle class working wife as a potent economic, psychological, political, and sociological force.

While turning our attention to the Indian scene, we come across such studies as the socio-economic condition of educated Indian women by Hate (1930, 1948, 1969). She has discovered that a deep and vital change has taken place in economic condition as well as in personal status of women. The main criterion of such a change, she opines, is the spread of education among them. She further adds that although the dark side of middle class woman's life is gradually being brightened up effecting a change in the status, the process has not been completed yet; it still continues changing.

Kapur, one of the few notable social scientists in the country, has taken an abiding interest in studying the course and pattern of changes in the life and attitude of educated married working women in India (Kapur 1970, 1973, 1974). In her studies, she consistently attempted to drive home the hypothesis that after the Independence of India the changed socio-economic conditions have made it imperative for women belonging to middle class to take up gainful employment. She has argued that this emancipation of women from their set tradition-bound ethos has mainly been instrumental in changing their life. And especially the entry of women, both of the middle and upper classes, into remunerative vocations has been the causal factor to be counted upon much in effecting changes pertaining to their role, status and the life patterns. Her findings also indicate, to paraphrase her, "Now not only those who are economically hard pressed get engaged in jobs but also those who use to live a socially useful life and add to the family finances. They have come to realise that work gives them personal status and an independent social standing. With the change in women's personal status and social stature there has come a change in her way of thinking and 'feeling'."

Desai's (1957) view on this issue is, "More and more women consider self respect and development of personality as necessary goals of life."

Majahan (1966) opines, "More and more educated women are taking up new occupational roles. Employment and income provide them with recognition, status, and a sense of achievement and ensure for them an equality of status with men."

Sengupta (1960) desires to see that middle class girl should think in terms of careers and economic independence. She feels, "It is only when women are economically secure and free to work in equal competition with men that a country can be called truly civilised."

The results of the pilot survey conducted by Ranade and Ramachandran (1970) also indicate, "There is no basic antagonism in middle class families towards women's employment." They further add, "The principal reason for the favourable disposition is that women's employment is a source of income, making her economically independent, enhancing family prestige, preparation for unforeseen circumstances and improving matrimonial prospects and so on."

Scholars have also tried to find out the social constraints that led women to take up out of home employment. According to Dube (1963), "The process has been generated and aided by a variety of factors which are operating almost simultaneously. Increasing opportunities for modern education, greater geographical and occupational mobility and the emergence of new economic patterns are in the main responsible for the trend."

Ross (1961) expresses her view, "Indeed the main reason why so many higher middle class women work without reproach is because everyone understands the economic problems of the middle class and that a wife's income is often essential to the family's standard of living."

Kapadia (1959), in the course of dealing with family, opines that the employment of women, which has become possible through education and present economic strains, has also affected the family greatly.

The problem of women in its entirety has of late been a deep concern and much debated an issue at the Government level. With a view to identifying and reporting upon the existing reality relating to the status and condition of women in India, the Government of India constituted a Committee in 1971. The said Committee has since brought out its results of investigation (*Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, 1974). In the Committee's opinion, the disturbing demographic trends as revealed by the declining proportion of women in the population, their low life expectancy, higher mortality and delineating work participation rates indicate a process of positive change. The change has occurred in a direction opposite to the stated goals of our society and its plan for social development. The Committee has also identified many false and mythical notions regarding women's roles and conditions. These have influenced plans and policies as well as their implementation during the last few decades. The reasons, however, lie in both ignorance and attitude.

Social scientists have pointed out that the new economic pattern has emerged in two main phases. The first is characterised by an option between career and marriage. And the second is a combination of the above two. The pioneering days of the first phase are over, and now it is the phase of combining family and work. Woman is thus subjected to a dual demand of home and work, and the pull of both the ends seems to be indeed conflicting. It requires both physical and psychological agreement and acceptance together with the capability of adjustment to these changes.

These are but a few ideas of the social scientists whose thought process centres around the working women or women's work. But it is the realisation that the usefulness of socio-economic data collected by them remains limited as far as the present study is concerned. Because the social scientists have dealt with the problem in a more general way, and nothing problem-specific anthropological perspective can perhaps be reflected from their studies. The studies made by Kapur (1970, 1973, 1974) and Hate (1930, 1948, 1969) are, however, critical and exhaustive in addressing the problem from different angles. But they have mainly devoted only to aspects concerning marital harmony and changing status, respectively. They have investigated the condition of women in the cities of Delhi, Bombay, Nagpur, Sholapur, and Pune.

While trying to appreciate the changes in social phenomenon through surveys in some major cities in India, a megapolis of India, namely Calcutta, did not figure in the map of social scientists. Calcutta, which is ethnically dominated by the Bengalee, differs distinctively in the ethnic make up and also in historicity from other big cities of India. She differs fundamentally from others especially with respect to tradition, values, and cultural norms.

Apart from filling up the gap in knowledge in an unexplored field of Calcutta, there are other good reasons, too, for selecting the locale. It is a fact that such working women are mostly, if not exclusively, to be found in the urban setting. And it is known that avenues of openings for them are concentrated only in the big cosmopolitan towns or metropolitan centres.

It is again in a city that people are highly exposed to western influence. The educated middle and upper class families, in particular, are influenced by the new techniques of mass communication, such as journal, magazine, radio, television and movie. They are thus of particular importance for a study on change, for they themselves are its disseminators. The city of Calcutta, being the capital of West Bengal, provides such a setting pre-eminently and affords an opportunity to undertake such a project fruitfully.

With the spread of education, the human surface of Bengal, alike other parts of India, has also been subjected to varied changes. For example, the women of Bengal, as history tells us, were also as usual expected to be confined within the four walls of home. They were to perform such duties which had been strictly related to looking after and rearing up of children, cooking food for the family, maintaining cleanliness of the house, and helping their husbands whenever required for. This traditional role of the Bengalee women which created for them a world of their own, got a good jolt. The knowledge and wisdom that they had been slowly acquiring over time through education and learning opened up for them the window of their mind. They were then mentally crawling into another world—a greater one—beyond the limits of their home When they were thus somewhat receptive, a clarion call by Mahatma Gandhi to women to participate in the freedom movement was much instrumental in weeding out their seclusion from home and making them fit to involve in things which were then happening around.

They moved out to become wage earners, breaking the traditional ethos. Urbanisation and education effected the change in the status of women. Small family, cost of urban living, higher standard of living and some such other relevant factors coupled with the rapid spread of education among the middle class women are some of the most important determinants for the upsurge of a new group of women. Very slowly, but steadily, a class of salaried group of women thus emerged in our society. This emerging

class by virtue of its own dynamics and inertia could ultimately achieve a stable position in the society. We, on the whole, find them with a changing role, status,and life patterns. The change is an ongoing dynamic process, however.

Present Study and its Scope

The nature and extent of such a change that affected the Bengalee working women in Calcutta is a case in point. This is worth probing into. Keeping this in view, a design was made to study the Hindu Bengalee middle class working women of Calcutta. The main objective of revealing the nature and extent of change among the middle class working women was through understanding and identifying the social phenomenon of (*i*) cultural change, (*ii*) continuity, and (*iii*) adjustment. The issue of adjustment is an important one, since it evolves from adaptive response. It originates from an attempt to strike a balance between the two diametrically opposite functional roles of women : (*i*) their role as wife, mother, daughter, sister, etc., at home, and (*ii*) their role as member of formal organisations outside home where they are employed. The study, it would appear, will automatically fill in the gap of our knowledge concerning the megapolis of Calcutta, which, hitherto, as already noted, has escaped the attention of social scientists.

Now questions may be asked "who are the middle class," and "why this particular segment of population was selected for study?" These call for an immediate attention.

But before doing so, let us see first how the social category "class" has been defined in general terms. According to Morris Ginsberg (1948), "Classes in modern societies may be described as groups of individuals who through common descent, similarity of occupation, wealth and education have come to have a similar mode of life, a similar stock of ideas, feelings, attitudes and forms of behaviour and who on any or all these grounds meet one another on equal terms and regard themselves. although with varying degrees of explicitness as belonging to one group. The primary determinants of social stratification are without doubt largely economic in character. Economic conditions determine an individual's occupation and this in turn is generally a fair index of his mode of life and educational attainments from which again may usually be inferred the sort of people whom he would meet on equal terms, the range of individuals from among whom he would normally choose his partner in marriage and so forth."

The concept of class may more meaningfully be defined with reference to prestige, as postulated by Robin M. Williams, Jr. (1951 : 89). Here social classes are defined as aggregate of individuals who occupy broadly

similar position in the scale of prestige. William has thus formulated four relatively discrete social classes while studying the American society. These are : a "lower class" of unskilled workers, a "working class" of mannual workers in semi-skilled and skilled occupations, a "middle class" of white-collar workers and professionals, and an "elite", differentiated from the middle class not so much in terms of occupation as of wealth and lineage.

We may now come back to our questions. The concept of middle class, whatever it might be, is rather amorphous and has been dealt with imprecisely in the existing literature. And no two scholars are not unequivocal on the meaning, implication and dimension while using the term. Professor G. S. Ghurye (1962) states,—"...the appellation 'Middle Class' was first used in 1812. By loose analogy middle class stands for a class that is stable and goes the middle of the road and is the salt of the social earth." Hate (1969) adopted the definition of middle class given by Central Statistical Organization as "All families following intellectual occupation except agriculture." Kapur (1970) assumed the middle class working women as the "white collar" workers.

We have thus considered middle class as a social class after Williams (1951). And due consideration has been given to education and style of life which are two important dimensions for defining a class in the context of Indian urban societies.

With regard to the selection of this segment of population, it may be pointed out that we had to fall back on it for obtaining an optimum effect on the aspect of change in the social phenomenon under consideration. It is well known that while the people of lower class segment are quite satisfied with the old ways of life, the members of the upper class urbanites do not have firm roots in traditions. It is indeed the middle class which is obsessed more with the traditional past, but at the same time, aspires for modern values. And it is this particular segment which confronts more problems and much hazards during the process of social change from tradition to modernity. It is the view of the intelligentsia that the middle class is exposed to divergent and conflicting values which determine the pace and direction of change in a given society. In view of the above noted realities, which come across in the cases of upper and lower class people, the selection for enquiring into the segment of middle class was adhered to. For our purpose, the term working women has been used for those who are only gainfully employed outside and certainly not for those who are engaged in social work or are doing honorary jobs.

Hypothesis Considered

The major hypothesis formulated was that gainful employment out-

side home by the middle class women brings forth a series of changes in their way of life, specifically concerning family composition, interpersonal relationship, economic role and status. It was further assumed that the break with the past would not be sharp but there would remain some items of cultural continuities linking the traditional way of life of the middle class women with the modern working middle class. It was based on the fact that the cultural values, norms and ethics of the middle class are deeply rooted in tradition.

Methodology, Sampling and Data Categories

Karl Pearson (1857-1936), the father of statistics and a philosopher, said in one of his writings "Science justifies itself in its methods" (Pearson 1949). Anthropology, too, being basically a field science, has its own-methodology for collecting data. In the present study the most important methods of collecting data by direct observation and interview were adopted. Information were also collected with the help of schedules and forms.

Unlike other studies of social scientists referred to earlier, which concerned mostly with one of the aspects of women's life in a discrete manner, the present study attempted to cover as many parameters as possibile relating to behavioural pattern of working women. This was thought of as a prime necessity for evolving a synthetic approach with a view to representing a broader perspective of working women's life. It may be admitted that the demand for collecting detail information that are really required for a study like the one launched at present, indeed, baffles any attempt to obtain a truly representative statistically reliable sample. In spite of one's having awareness of different sampling methods, she or he cannot perhaps strictly adhere to them particularly in such situations which deal with abstraction of information connected with intimate and personal matters especially relating to women's life. One is rather left in the mercy of those who willfully oblige the investigator by supplying the desired information. In this sensitive area, naturally a considerable number of drop-outs are always expected.

Since the chief concern of the study was to reveal the factors responsible for changing the life pattern, it was considered appropriate to go for the 'snow ball' sampling technique for obtaining a sample. The sample drawn by this method would also reliably represent a fair cross section of working women population in Calcutta.

It was not so much of seeking statistical reliability, but for the nature of our objective we require a thorough understanding of the situation. This could be achieved by drawing sample through snow ball technique without serious loss in the quality of information.

In order to represent the universe of working women in Calcutta, it was thought necessary to obtain systematic samples at least from three major occupational categories, namely teacher, office worker, and technical personnel (although it would have been better to draw samples from a wide spectrum of occupations). It may be noted that these three categories are more viable and constitute the major bulk of the women working force.

It is now in order to record in brief the actual operational part of the field work together with field experience. The investigation was carried out in two phases. At the beginning, a pilot survey was undertaken during February-April 1971, in order to generate some concrete results which would eventually be of help in conducting an extended survey. This programme was restricted within the offices of the Indian Museum campus which comprises at least half a dozen Central Government establishments. On the basis of the experience and knowledge gained from this pilot survey, the second phase of work was embarked upon, a little belated in 1974-75, by extending the survey programme over the working women attached to different offices and educational institutions in Calcutta. A list of the organisations where survey was carried out has been given in Appendix. The basic information collected cover the major aspects of (*i*) family structure and composition, (*ii*) residence, (*iii*) education, (*iv*) occupation, (*v*) utilisation of money, (*vi*) marriage, and (*vii*) social life. Besides, care was taken to obtain adequate information on social and economic background of the subjects as well as on their mode of adjustment at the two fronts. During the course of investigation the subjects had to be convinced that they could impart secrets with trust as strict privacy would be maintained and the information collected would never be used for any purpose other than research. They were requested to be candid and honest in answering the questions posed, and to vent out their genuine feelings and reactions ungrudingly. Each and every subject was personally interviewed at her place of work, and the information obtained were recorded in a schedule prepared for the purpose.

As already noted, the inquiry was initiated in a small scale at the Indian Museum campus. Being a member of the working woman force, employed in a Central Government scientific organisation situated within the said campus, there were many a working women known to me, serving other organisations, including those situated at the campus. The advantage of being acquainted with some of the subjects here gave me an opportunity of beginning the inquiry in the said campus. It may be mentioned that in spite of my acquaintance, much time had to be spent in convincing them about the actual purpose of inquiry. When done with the job, these subjects kindly referred me to their friends who were working in other establishments beyond the limits of the Indian Museum campus. In this way, the programme of work could be extended, and gradually with the help of fur-

ther references, the size of the sample could be increased. Owing to various limitations, including that of time, however, we could obtain a workable sample of 424 working women.

The interview had to be carried out in parts. The number of questions being large enough, and the time that the working women could spare at one sitting being inadequate for the purpose, the interview had to be postponed till some other day whenever the respondent so desired; it was resumed at the next meeting. The normal practice was to avail of two or more sittings for completing the interview of a single subject. Intimate and personal problems could not naturally be drawn and discussed until a satisfactory state of rapport was established with the subject. It so happened in many cases that I had to be at their homes, once or several times, for close observation and discussion. It was through this process that a considerable bulk of the sample could be studied intensively.

Contextually, it may be stated that in Calcutta there are some 137, 024 working women engaged in various economic persuits. The sample drawn for the present purpose comprises data concerning 424 working women. The sample, however, does not apparently seem to hold any relationship with the universe constituted by the working women. But it may be noted, the sample being 'large' statistically, would be effective in representing a statistical profile of the universe from where it has been drawn.

The sample obtained may further be classified into three major occupational sets of sub-samples representating teachers, office workers, and technical personnel. The distribution of occupational sets in the sample is shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 : Distribution of working woman sample into three occupational categories

Occupational category	No.	Per cent
Teacher	145	34.2
Office worker	172	40.6
Technical personnel	107	25.2
Total	424	100.0

A cursory glance at the table reveals immediately that office workers are represented more in the sample. Teachers occupy second position, followed by the technical personnel.

These three sets of occupational categories of working woman may be considered as independent entities bearing in mind the historical sequence of their participation in respective professions and their educational diversity. The assumption is that owing to these situations, sub-samples of occupational sets might reveal some difference in their behavioural pattern.

Data Categories

In order to test the proposed hypothesis it is essential to depend upon two categories of data relating to women. The first, or the primary, consists of the data on the present condition of the Bengalee Hindu working women. This we have achieved through the present field work in Calcutta, which we have recorded in the preceding sections. And the second category comprises the data concerning the traditional way of life of the Bengalee Hindu women. The latter category of data serves the purpose of much-needed reference frame for interpreting the data of the former category. In order to bring together the data relating to the second category for the very purpose of constructing a profile of the traditional way of life of the group, we had to fall back necessarily on the published literature. Most notable among them are the work of Margaret M. Urquhart (1925), Kshitimohan Sen (1357 B.S.), P. Thomas (1964), Ramesh Chandra Majumdar (1376 B.S.), A. S. Altekar (1973), and Padimni Sengupta (1974).

CHAPTER TWO

Women at Work

WORLD OF WORK—NATURE AND PARTICIPATION

In the preceding chapter, we have tried to drive home the fact that in what way the women of India have made a truly remarkable stride towards attaining a new stature by taking up gainful, out of home employment. This happened gradually but steadily within the span of the last few decades. Equipped with better education many vistas have opened up for women today in the form of job opportunities. In the present chapter we intend to deal with the specific information regarding their work, work environment, job preference, attitude to work, job satisfaction, aspirational level and some such other relevant matters. But before we proceed to the brisk task, it seems in order to provide at the very outset an overview of the general Indian situation concerning the participation of women working force.

According to the returns available in the Census of India 1971, there are 31 million women workers in the subcontinent of India, out of a total of 264 million general women population. Of this 31 million, 28 million are in rural areas and the rest 3 million in urban areas. In rural areas, 87 per cent of women are engaged in agriculture and less than 2 per cent in manufacturing industries. While in urban areas, the service sector claimed the largest percentage of women workers (38%), followed by agricultural labourers (17.5%). In rural areas, 13 per cent of the women are in the work force and in urban areas the figure is less than 7 per cent. Although women in urban areas are being increasingly employed in the service sector, they still play a minor role in the urban work force in India.

The entire work force is employed in two different sectors of economy, namely organised and unorganised sectors. "The organised sector in the Indian economy comprises of :—(*a*) all public sector establishments, i.e., all services under the Central, State and Local Governments and occupations in Public undertakings in the field of industry, credit financing, public utilities, etc., and (*b*) non-agricultural private sector establishments which employ 10 or more persons." (*Report of the Committee on the Status of*

Women in India 1974). This division is maintained following the production relations and the degree of penetration of public control and regulations. The former category of organised sector is characterised by modern relations of production and is regulated by laws that seek to protect the security and working conditions of labour as well as by labour organisations that can engage in collective bargaining. And the latter category, the unorganised sector (which includes agriculture and various industries and services), is characterised by the absence of such protective measures and machinery as provided in the organised sector. Of the total female working force in our country, only to the tune of 6 per cent is engaged in the organised sector with which we are interested in.

It may be noted here that even in the big cities with a population strength of one million or more, the rate of working women's participation does not exceed 9 per cent. The situation is unlike the western countries, where the service sector is more often manned by women. In order to get an idea about the situation of the actual rate of urban working women's participation in some of the big cities of India, including Calcutta, that prevailed upto 1971, Table 2.1 would be useful.

Table 2.1 : Women workers in some Indian cities with participation rate

Million Plus Cities	No. of female workers	Female working force participation rate*
Hyderabad	70,771	8.2
Ahmedabad	35,819	5.0
Greater Bombay	208,676	8.4
Bangalore	63,197	8.2
Madras	78,429	6.7
Kanpur	20,435	3.7
Calcutta	137,024	4.7
Delhi	82,657	5.1

Source : Bose, 1975, p. 170.
*Number of female workers for every 100 females.

Further, to feel the historical pulse of the trend of female component in work force over the past six decades, 1911 through 1971, Table 2.2 is provided. The figures in the table immediately suggest a decreasing trend of participation rate over the years commencing from 1911. The decade of 1961-71 shows an abrupt fall in female participation rate. This abrupt fall is perhaps mainly owing to the introduction of machine which resulted in significant drop-out of unskilled women labourers in the unorganised sector.

Table 2.2 : Trend in women work force participation 1911-1971

Year	% female workers to total females	% female workers to total labour force
1911	33.73	34.44
1921	33.73	34.02
1931	27.63	31.17
1951	23.00	28.98
1961	27.96	31.53
1971	11.86	17.35

Source : *Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India.* Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education & Social Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi, 1974, p. 153.

On the contrary, if the trend in organised sector is examined it could be seen that the trend is just the reverse. This is evident from the figures in Table 2.3. The increase in participation rate in the organised sector is due to more and more of the urban educated women going in for employment in this sector.

Table 2.3 : Women in the Organised Sector, 1962-73

Year	Number of employees in '00,000		
	Total	Women	% women employees to total employees
1962	125.8	13.7	10.8
1965	150.0	16.8	11.1
1970	170.4	18.9	11.1
1973	188.2	21.4	11.3

Source : *Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India,* Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi, 1974, p. 184.

The number of women employees in the organised sector constitutes a very small fraction of the total female working force. According to the employment market information of the Directorate General of Employment and Training, the number of women employed in the sector is 21.4 lakh. This comes to a little more than 11 per cent of the employees in the organised sector.

After scanning the situation of actual participation of women in organised sector of employment it is now necessary to asses the actual nature and extent of participation of working women in various categories of jobs

outside their homes. To talk about the nature, what comes upper most is the significant involvement of the middle class women in the field of teaching, clerical jobs and medical and health services. The point may be illustrated by the material gathered in Table 2.4. It shows the nature of some selected professions where women are employed along with the extent of their participation. What comes out immediately is the overwhelming involvement (63.8%) of women in teaching alone. A deeper probe into the issue reveals that of the total number of teachers, nearly three-fourth (73.65%) are absorbed in teaching at the middle and primary school levels. The share of secondary school and university teachers is in the order of 19.1 per cent and 7.24 per cent, respectively.

Table 2.4 : Nature and extent of participation of women in some selected profession

Profession	No. of women employed	
	Private sector (1967)	Public sector (1968)
Teaching personnel		
Teachers—middle and primary	21,431	213,452
Teachers—secondary school	32,686	28,260
Teachers—university	18,897	4,206
Medical and health personnel		
Nurses	6,845	22,727
Midwives and health visitors	1,196	24,318
Nursing attendants and related workers	—	23,881
Physicians and surgeons	—	3,091
Ayah and nurse maids	—	5,675
Telephone operators		
Clerical & related workers	1,051	5,052
Stenographers	3,494	2,113
Ministerial assistants and clerks	6,226	67,623
Typists and teletypists	1,643	5,852

Source : *Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi, 1974, p. 205.

Clerical and allied job ranks next in order of numerical strength. At the beginning of 1960, a sample survey on the pattern of graduate employment in the country was undertaken in Central Government Offices by the Directorate General of Employment and Training. The finding of the survey indicates that clerical and related work together takes a position of second order. The views expressed by the Registars of Employment Exchanges and various employers both in public and private sectors make it clear that more and more educated women are being employed as receptionists, clerks, stenographers and typists. Out of 9.18 lakhs of women job seekers of our country, registered with various employment exchanges at the end of 1973, as many as 67,355 were found seeking employment as clerks, typists, stenographers, etc. The concentration and magnitude of women job seekers in various fields could be identified from the data set out in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 : Women job-seekers

Profession	Number of women
Typists	50,448
Stenographers	7,080
Clerks	2,800
Key Punch Operators	2,592
Telephone Operators	1,392
Middle School Teachers	27,525
Primary School Teachers	26,100
Secondary School Teachers	24,163
Manual Training Teachers	6,885
Nursing Attendants	5,926
Midwives	2,555
General Nurses	2,058

Source : Directorate General of Employment and Training, Government of India

According to a study made by the *International Labour Office* (Employment of Women, 1970), only 17 per cent of the professional and technical workers in India are women. A mere 5 per cent of the managerial and administrative workers are female.

Besides the above noted kinds of services, women are also found to be engaged in legal profession and in administration, in a few cases even as heads of establishments. Apart from this they are also engaged as engineers, architects, technologists, physicists, chemists, accountants, auditors, editors, journalists, public relation officers, pilots, air hostesses, air safety officers,

business managers and executives, publishers, and the like. The participation of women in these professions is, however, meagre. That their participation rate is too low or perhaps negligible to be accounted for may be reconciled from the data presented in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6 : Women in unusual occupation/profession

Profession/Occupation	Female worker	
	No. of female	per cent of women workers in relation to total workers in the category
Lawyers	1,300	1.36
Architects, Engineers, Technolgists and Surveyors	700	0.46
Accountants and auditors and related workers	2,700	1.96
Editors and journalists	500	3.57
Working proprietors, directors and managers, wholesale and retail trades	5,300	2.23
Directors and managers, financial institutions	400	1.02

Note : Estimated from 1 per cent sample data

Source : *Census of India*, 1971, Series I-India, Part II Special, All India Census Tables, Table B-V-Part A

In the context of this general Indian picture, we may now try to know the specific conditions that are prevailing in the State of West Bengal. This can be attempted in a way by considering the quantum of women employees involved in the organised sector in West Bengal, as against of other States. This has been done in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 : Distribution of working women through States

State/Union Territory(a)	Total workers (lakhs) 1971	Female Workers (b)			Women employes in the organised sector ('000) December 1976
		Lakhs 1971	As per-cent of total workers in the State in 1971	As per-cent of total female popula-tion in the State in 1971	
States					
Nagaland	2.6	1.1	42.3	45.8	...
Meghalaya	4.5	1.7	37.8	34.7	6
Manipur	3.7	1.3	35.1	24.5	...

Table 2.7 (*contd*)

States					
Andhra Pradesh	180.1	51.9	28.8	24.2	127
Himachal Pradesh	12.8	3.5	27.3	20.7	17
Maharashtra	183.9	47.9	26.0	19.7	296
Madhya Pradesh	153.0	37.7	24.6	18.7	104
Kerala	62.2	14.5	23.3	13.5	321
Tamil Nadu	147.4	30.8	20.9	15.1	254
Karnataka	101.8	20.4	20.0	14.2	121
Gujarat	84.0	13.2	15.7	10.2	120
Bihar	174.9	24.5	14.0	8.9	111
Rajasthan	80.5	10.2	12.7	8.3	62
Orissa	68.5	7.4	10.8	6.8	31
Uttar Pradesh	273.3	27.7	10.1	6.7	136
Tripura	4.3	0.4	9.3	5.3	6
Assam	40.9	3.2	7.8	4.6	228
West Bengal	123.7	9.2	7.4	4.4	222
Jammu & Kashmir	13.7	0.8	5.8	3.7	12
Haryana	26.5	1.1	4.2	2.4	34
Punjab	39.1	0.7	1.8	1.1	68
Union Territories					
Arunachal Pradesh	2.7	1.1	40.7	50.0	...
Mizoram	1.5	0.6	40.0	37.5	2
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.3	0.1	33.3	25.0	...
Goa, Daman & Diu	2.7	0.7	25.9	16.3	9
Pondicherry	1.4	0.3	21.4	13.0	5
Chandigarh	0.9	0.1	11.1	9.1	5
Delhi	12.3	0.9	7.3	5.0	59
Andaman & Nicobar	0.4	—	—	—	...
Lakshadweep	0.1	—	—	—	...
All India(c)	1,803.7	313.0	17.4	11.9	2,356

Notes : (*a*) Ranked by percentage of female workers to total workers

(*b*) A "Female Worker" is a woman whose main activity is participation in any economically productive work by her physical or mental activity; work includes not only actual work but also effective supervision and direction of work

(*c*) Excludes Sikkim

... = Not available. — = Nil or negligible.

Source : *Basic Statistics on India Economy*, vol. II, Commerce Research Bureau, Bombay (1977)

The Sub-samples : Age structure and Civil Condition

In the light of the above facts that have been gathered and discussed above, let us now examine our own material. It may, once more, be noted that the present sample from which the inferences will be drawn comprises data on 424 educated working women of Calcutta. The sample is constituted by sub-samples representing three major occupational sets, namely teachers, office workers, and technical personnel. In the sub-samples of teachers, the subjects who were employed for teaching in schools, colleges and in various university post graduate departments were included. In the second sub-sample comprising office workers, those who were employed as clerks, or as a member of administrative managerial staff side, in government, semi-government or in any big private organisation, were considered. The last group, which represented technical personnel, considered those subjects who were employed in a wide range of scientific/technical organisations as technicians having professional expertise.

Before we proceed to examine and analyse the material, it is of foremost importance to know first about the structure and composition of the sample we are dealing with in regard to age and civil condition of the participating informants. This is felt necessary for various reasons. The vital one, of course, is that we must have an *a-priori* knowledge about specific age groups and particular civil condition of the informants, which are considered as dependent variables influencing the occupational life of the working women. Keeping this in view, the distribution of age of the informants grouped into four-year age group classes is given in Table 2.8.

Table 2.8 : Distribution of age of the informants

Age group	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
20—24	22	5.2	2	1.4	15	8.7	5	4.7
25—29	62	14.6	20	13.8	25	14.5	17	15.9
30—34	132	31.1	45	31.0	58	33.7	29	27.1
35—39	88	20.8	31	21.4	31	18.0	26	24.3
40—44	61	14.4	19	13.1	17	9.9	25	23.4
45—49	37	8.7	16	11.0	17	9.9	4	3.7
50—54	17	4.0	10	6.9	6	3.5	1	0.9
55+	5	1.2	2	1.4	3	1.7	—	—
Total	424	100.0	145	100.0	172	99.9	107	100.0

The analysis of the distribution of age structure shows immediately that the bulk of the sample is constituted by the working women falling in four age group classes, *i.e.*, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, and 40-44. Of these, it could be seen nearly one-third of the informants (31.12%) lie in the single age class of 30-34. The general picture that emerges regarding the concentration of the informants in some specific age classes in the total sample also holds good for the sub-samples.

The number of informants beyond 45 years of age shows a marked decrease. Particularly in the case of technical category, the participation rate has abruptly declined. One of the causes of the abrupt decline might be attributed to relatively recent entry of women in this category compared to entry in teaching and general office job. From the analysis it becomes apparent that whatever the sample reflects, it mostly represents the views of informants within the age range of 24-44 years.

Table 2.9 : Marital condition of the informants

Marital condition	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Unmarried	169	39.9	54	37.2	68	39.5	47	43.9
Married	244	57.5	86	59.3	103	59.9	55	51.4
Widow	10	2.4	4	2.8	1	0.6	5	4.7
Divorced	1	0.2	1	0.7	—	—	—	—
Total	424	100.0	145	100.0	172	100.0	107	100.0

In Table 2.9, the civil condition of the working women under consideration is shown. The sample is constituted by 60 per cent ever married women. The proportion is more or less same for the sub-samples also. From the figures in Table 2.10 it will be further evident that in all the age classes both the ever married and unmarried informants are well represented. The frequency distribution of unmarried women beyond the age of 44 years has abruptly fallen, as expected, compared to that of the married women. From the composition the question of the sample being biased, through the value-loaded feelings of either married or unmarried informants, may be ruled out. More things relating to marriage will be taken up and discussed later on.

Table 2.10 : Marital condition and age structure

Age group	Unmarried		Ever married	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
20—24	19	11.2	3	1.2
25—29	35	20.7	27	10.6
30—34	47	27.8	85	33.3
35—39	32	18.9	56	22.0
40—44	20	11.8	41	16.1
45—49	12	7.1	25	9.8
50—54	3	1.8	14	5.5
55+	1	0.6	4	1.5
Total	169	99.9	255	100.0

Note : Ever married includes married, widow and divorced

But Why They Go for Jobs?

After gathering some basic idea about the actual structure and composition of the sample, let us now attempt considering the dimension of 'women at work'. Using the Parsonian model of social action there are three characters of any social action: actor, situation, and orientation. Orientation may be cognitive, cathetic or evaluatory (Parsons 1972). We are to analyse the behavioural aspect of the women at work from this point of view. What motivates them to seek employment and what is their attitude to work are some of the questions that deserve consideration now.

On analysing the entire range of information collected from the informants, it could be realised that there are two major reasons for which the women are forced to take up employment. The data obtained clearly vouch that they are being pressurised from two distinctly different sources, as shown in Table 2.11. The primary motive is economic (about 62%), and the secondary is emotional (about 38%). The latter one, so to say, is more personal in nature. The economic necessity indeed acts as a strong pull, while the emotional one generates an urge within one's self for being pushed voluntarily. The former one is solely extraneous, while the latter is intrinsic. In other words, we find both cognitive and cathetic orientation present in the motive for selecting out of home jobs by the women of the sample though the latter orientation weighs more heavily among two categories of working women, namely teachers and office workers. Among the women who have chosen the technical jobs it is mainly due to emotive and evaluatory urge felt by them from within.

Table 2.11 : Percentage distribution of women working for two main motives

	Economic motive		Emotional motive	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
All	261	61.6	163	38.4
Teacher	84	57.9	61	42.1
Office worker	125	72.7	47	27.3
Technical personnel	52	48.6	55	51.4

It is a reality of the situation that a middle class family of today can hardly depend on one man's earning. To meet the crisis of insufficiency, the women work. It is not only the question to meet the bare crisis but it is also to help run the family smoothly and to supplement husband's or family's purse.

Barring the economic necessity, which is reflected to the tune of about 62 per cent, there is also emotional pressure for taking up jobs. This pressure cannot be considered negligible. Because quite a sizeable proportion of the present sample, to the order of nearly 38 per cent, positively expressed the feeling that they took up employment driven by various reasons, other than economic, which can be considered as emotional. From the data it may be abstracted that some women did take up jobs really for the sake of keeping themselves engaged in outdoor work. This group of women simply works for the sake of work only. When asked why they initiated work outside home, despite adequate work at hand in home, promptly the reply came from some, 'to get relief from the drudgery of routine household work.' Others reacted by saying, 'to get satisfaction from the feeling that we are enjoying equal rights with men by sharing the burden of work outside.' Still some others held the view that they worked in order to satisfy their personal desire for self-expression and self-assertion.

The reasons for taking up jobs are, however, really diverse, ranging from such basic felt-needs as gross economic necessity to ambition of a career, as is shown in Table 2.12. The reasons have been classified in terms of two major thrusts of pressure as noted already, the first being economic and the other emotional.

Table 2.12 : Reasons for undertaking jobs

	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
I. Economic pressure								
(*i*) Gross economic necessity	105	24.8	25	17.2	53	30.8	27	25.2
(*ii*) To help the family/betterment of family	63	14.8	28	19.3	23	13.4	12	11.2
(*iii*) To supplement family income	47	11.1	6	4.1	32	18.6	9	8.4
(*iv*) Self support	46	10.8	25	17.2	17	9.9	4	3.7
II. Emotional pressure								
(*i*) Liking/Personal interest/Fascination	44	10.4	14	9.7	11	6.4	19	17.8
(*ii*) To utilize time, education and energy fruitfully	52	12.3	22	15.2	13	7.6	17	15.9
(*iii*) Economic independence	41	9.7	11	7.6	19	11.0	11	10.3
(*iv*) Ambition of a career	26	6.1	14	9.7	4	2.3	8	7.5
Total	424	100.0	145	100.0	172	100.0	107	100.0

The analysis brings out, *inter alia*, one interesting feature. Economic pressure is a determinant factor for taking up employment for those who belong to the category of office workers, compared to the other two occupational categories. In contrast, the technical personnel as a group took up employment impelled by emotional pressure. On the whole, it may be inferred that decision for taking up employment outside home is not solely determined by bare economic consideration but there are other reasons too. This fact itself loudly speaks of significant change in traditional attitude towards taking up employment outside home. The feeling of equality with men with respect to work or of self-expression and self-assertion and also ambition for a career are some of the positive pointers for seeking job. The root cause for all these aspirations sprouts certainly from attainment of formal education.

Factors of Civil Condition, Education, Age and Continuity in Service

So far we had been concerned with the whole sample, irrespective of civil condition of the respondents. But it would be of interest to know at this state, whether a particular civil condition of informants had any specific relation with taking up of employment. We already know that our sample of working women is constituted by both unmarried and ever married women, the ratio being in the neighbourhood of 40 : 60 (cf. Table 2.9). It would now be quite relevant to examine the following queries. Do unmarried women initiate into the job outside home just to while away time till they get married? Whether more women begin their service career after getting married? Is marriage a hindrance to employment? And some such other questions of overriding interest call for our immediate attention.

In order to seek answers to these queries the data gathered in Table 2.13 would appear relevant. From the material presented in the table, the scart reply to the first query would be generally 'no'. Although, as shown already in Table 2.9, the married women (60.15%) outnumber the unmarried women (39.85%), they actually took up jobs mostly during their maiden days—either driven by economy or emotion. From the table it evinces that this category of working women is constituted by nearly 74 per cent of the informants. Therefore, the question of mere passing time by women before they get married is not tenable. Rather it may be noted that women before their marriage did take up out of home employment, scoring about 77 per cent of the sample. Economic consideration appears to be more potent in this matter.

It could further be seen that about 26 per cent of working women took up employment even after marriage. This is quite a high proportion and is over one-fourth of the sample. At least from this standpoint marriage cannot perhaps be considered as creating hindrance in undertaking jobs outside home.

Employment after marriage is, however, more in response to emotion rather than economic needs. Contextually, notable is the information that married women are found to be more eager to go in for teaching as well as in technical group than serving in clerical cadre. Besides academic and technical qualifications, that are the essential prerequisites for entering into such professions (Table 2.14), the more plausible reason for taking up such employments by married women might be, *inter alia*, the age (Table 2.15) which puts a bar in entering service life as a ministerial staff. It will be seen later on that the mean age at marriage is estimated at 24.8, that is to say 25 years. This age stands in the way of securing a job in office, especially in ministerial cadre. In technical vocation, there is some relaxa-

Table 2.13 : Reason for getting into employment by marital status

Reason	All				Teacher				Office worker				Technical personnel			
	Before marriage		After marriage		Before marriage		After marriage		Before marriage		After marriage		Before marriage		After marriage	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Economy	201	77.0	60	23.0	58	69.0	26	31.0	98	78.4	27	21.6	45	86.5	7	13.5
Emotion	112	68.7	51	31.3	36	59.0	25	41.0	38	80.8	9	19.2	38	69.1	17	30.9
Total	313	73.8	111	26.2	94	64.8	51	35.2	136	79.1	36	20.9	83	77.6	24	22.4

Note : Before marriage includes data on unmarried

tion of age limit compared to the ministerial category, while in teaching profession there is no such strict age-bar, at least for the potential candidates who are below 35 years of age.

Table 2.14 : Education and employment

Education/ Degree	All		Teacher		Office worker		Tech. Personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Doctorate	32	7.5	18	12.4	—	—	14	13.1
Post Graduate	172	40.6	78	53.8	15	8.7	79	73.8
Medical	12	2.8	9	6.2	—	—	3	2.8
Graduate	149	35.1	40	27.6	98	57.0	11	10.3
Under Graduate	59	13.9	—	—	59	34.3	—	—

During the course of our discussion we have already hinted upon that education and age are two determinant factors in endorsing a service. In Table 2.14, the association of education and employment has been brought out. The table is self-explanatory. It could immediately be seen that about 72 per cent and 90 per cent of the women workers, who are post-graduates, are employed in teaching and technical professions, respectively; whereas only some 9 per cent post-graduates are in the general office job. It may, however, be noted that mere graduation sets the lower limit in occupation for the first (roughly 28%) and third (10%) categories, while it is the highest for the second category (57%). A deeper probe into the issue reveals that graduates in the first category are either honours graduates or else possess a diploma in teaching with the exception of only a few cases. Even then they are eligible for teaching at school level only, not to speak of teaching in degree college or in university departments. In the third category, it is very few who had entered service long back when competition was much less and recruitment rules were not so rigid. They, indeed, form a minority.

Table 2.15 : Range and mean age of women in getting into employment

	No.	Range	Mean
All	424	18 — 46	24.67
Teacher	145	20 — 46	26.82
Office worker	172	18 — 41	22.54
Technical personnel	107	20 — 33	24.20

Again, the material gathered in Table 2.15 would be of much help in identifying the role of age in getting into a specific type of employment. The stray cases of absorption in clerical job beyond the specific age-bar are explainable. Here, the married informants could secure jobs only on compassionate ground. Either their husbands expired in harness or they became physically and/or mentally unfit to resume duties. In such circumstances wives had been provided with employment for subsistence. In technical service the factor of late entry rests with the provision provided for lateral induction through various service commission bodies.

Table 2.16 : Reasons for taking up and continuing with job

Reason	For taking up employment before marriage		For Continuing after marriage	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
1. Gross economic necessity	41	28.5	23	16.0
2. To help the family/betterment of family	23	16.0	32	22.2
3. To supplement family income	13	9.0	6	4.2
4. Self support	13	9.0	6	4.2
5. Liking/Personal interest/ Fascination	11	7.6	19	13.2
6. To utilize time, eduction and energy fruitfully	19	13.2	22	15.2
7. Economic independence	13	9.0	15	10.4
8. Ambition of a career	11	7.6	13	9.0
9. Habituated	—	—	8	5.5
Total	144	99.9	144	99.9

Now if we look at the reasons for continuance in service by the women who got married after entering into service a clear shift in reasons could be discernible. This may be seen in Table 2.16. Although economic reasons reigned supreme for getting employed before marriage, the reason for continuing job after marriage assumed emotional validation. This finding clearly vouches that economy does not, as it was initially, really play a pivotal role in continuing the job. But it is the women's aspiration for self-assertion and self-expression that impell them to continue with the job. Even after getting married they do not apparently like to sacrifice the liberty, right of working and the scope for earning money that they are enjoying. On the whole, though there is shift in pressure of reasons, the finding substantiates that marriage does not really put one in hindrance or disadvantage if she is interested in getting along with the job.

The Working Environment

That women work, and work outside home, be it for family or for self, is a bare fact today. But what is the condition or rather the environment around them, under which they are working in various organisations, is an interesting aspect worth analysis. Is it congenial, or otherwise? Have they any feeling either for working environment or against? Are they as free as their male counterpart in the office or suffering from complex—say, inferiority or superiority? Have they been able to adjust and adapt themselves to the needs of the job; or have failed to catch up? To sort out such problems a thorough analysis calls for an immediate care.

A careful examination of relevant data has aptly brought out an interesting phenomenon. This is about the varied environment encountered in different offices supporting wage earners of different categories. It is no denying the fact that normally a congenial atmosphere in office, especially behavioural relationship, helps one achieving satisfactory output in work. It is also no denying that differences in atmosphere do exist commensurate with the nature of professions or occupations. For instance, we encounter two completely different settings that prevail upon in teaching institutions and in general offices. However, the settings of some offices dealing with academic or technical persuits, which are controlled and governed by Government Administration, to some extent resemble to that prevailing in general offices. The difference involved here is just in keeping with the nature of work. Therefore, for the purpose of knowing the actual situations or settings in question, it is better to analyse them separately.

Teaching is undoubtedly one of the largest of all professions that we know of in India and, of course, in West Bengal. The working atmosphere in the profession is rather congenial. It is congenial to the extent that one can remain reasonably satisfied on the whole. Hierarchy or bureaucracy, which at times—and sometimes mostly—takes away peace owing to rude or impolite behaviour, is not a factor of great concern or of discomfort. There is liberty, which in turn generates a sense of confidence and responsi bility, to carry out the prescribed job of teaching satisfactorily.

The relationship among the teaching members in the staff is usually cordial. This is mostly owing to the fact that the teachers of a particular institution are more or less at par, both in terms of academic achievements and salary that they draw. Although there are tiers in the organisational set up of the institutions, these do not normally pose problems of interference culminating in strained relationships amongst themselves. On the other hand, the relationship between teachers and students is generally cordial. The students usually look upon their teachers with reverence and awe.

On the top of all these there is another aspect of emotional satisfaction in the mind of teachers. There is a strong feeling in them that they are playing a vital role in nation building by way of putting their best efforts in building good moral character of young citizens as well as helping to build a career for the future generation of the country.

Teaching at a girls' school or college is entirely a covetable situation. Their feeling is 'we are but at home.' Of course there is a slight difference in atmosphere in institutions where women teach along with men. But this does not reflect much in their mind. Rather they are seen to be complacent. According to the informants it is by and large the political issues that sometimes vitiate the whole atmosphere of the institution. This is, however, temporary in nature.

The working condition and environment in establishments, other than academic and technical institutions, are some what known and would perhaps only need a little clarification in this context. In the organised sectors, there are provisions which safeguard the employees' interest, be a man or a woman. This security is lacking to some extent in non-government organisations, be it a teaching institution or commercial office. Those, who are employed in office, are to work along with men, and to have male colleagues is a common feature. This situation, working side by side with men, sometimes creates much uncalled for tensions. And this indeed happened in the recent past as was reported by some informants who entered service in late forties or early fifties of this century. At the beginning it was just a new type of occupation, rather a male oriented job for women. Men's attitude towards women colleagues was absolutely conditioned by old conception of sex specific roles. This naturally created complexity and tension of various degrees. But with the passage of time, and also owing to day to day interactions in office with persons of opposite sex, there was a gradual development at the level of between-sex understanding. This phenomenon has changed its complexion to a larger extent reducing superflous stimulations. This change has also been accelerated due to input of increasingly larger number of women workers in offices since the recent past.

Today, as could readily be seen, working and sitting side by side and close by with men co-workers are not a matter even to be talked of. Women have been able to develop and make such suitable adjustments as are necessary for a purposeful co-existence in the sphere of office.

In the organisational set up, bureaucracy or hierarchy is an in-built mechanism which is being maintained by manning persons of different rank and order. One, therefore, needs simultaneous interactions with her superiors, co-workers, and subordinates at the office. As a matter of fact,

interactions and exchange of views have become almost a routine affair. At the same time, it may be borne in mind that the behaviour and expectation of behaviour from others depend largely upon one's own character and personality. Since no two individuals are alike in this respect, mentally, differences in the nature of performances of behaviour are bound to be inevitable. If a woman becomes ego-centric and abhors social communication with men, especially of her own rank, she is bound to suffer isolation at office. Often she may be identified by her colleagues for this behaviour as a snob or sometimes a high-brow. On the other hand, if one behaves in a friendly manner by mixing with them a little freely and becomes nice to them, she is most likely running the risk of being misinterpreted and misunderstood, earning unpalatable reputation, not usually being liked by a descent soul.

In the course of interview with the informants, a sense of mixed feeling for their male co-workers became apparent. A good bulk (54.0%) had expressed that close interaction with men at office during the office hours in connection with work is a natural and harmless affair. To them there is nothing worng in it to be worried about. Some (16.0%) even have gone much ahead to appreciate it and reported categorically that male colleagues are more sympathetic, open minded, co-operative and trustworthy. They are of the opinion that many and varied problems of life beyond the purview of office can profitably be discussed with them and sorted out barring, however, a few issues which are strictly private and confidential. There is a third group (22.8%) which believes that friendship with male colleagues is in no way profitable. On the contrary, this group is rather afraid of establishing friendship with men for they think that this may eventually lead to an uncalled for ill reputation. They feel that it is wise to maintain only an apparent good relationship with them for the sake of work in office and certainly not more than that. There is a fourth group (7.1%), a minority one, which can not stand the male colleagues. The views expressed by this group is that the male colleagues are jealous because of women's involvement in jobs and encroachment into their fields. The interaction of women office workers with their subordinates is again a bit limited and official compared to what has just been said with regard to the interaction between colleagues of the same rank. Although it is limited, it does not concern much to them. The general consensus is that no gain could be made by bossing over the subordinates or lodging complain against them.

But from all these analysis concerning the behavioural interactions one thing seems to be uppermost in the minds of women office workers. They strongly feel that men have not yet been able to welcome and shape their minds to accept a situation of working under a lady boss. Men's ego is bruised and hurt if they happen to be subservient to women boss in office circumstantially.

We may now turn our attention to attempt assessing the situation of behavioural pattern that exists in the category of technical personnel. As already noted, the sample size of this group is relatively less compared to that in other two categories. In Calcutta there are a limited number of establishments connected with research and scientific and technical persuits where a considerable number of women are employed. Although these organisations are controlled by government and there exists a hierarchy alike any other government office, owing to the basic differences in work and job assignments, a different kind of behavioural inter-relationships and inter-dependence has developed amongst colleagues. This could be seen from the dealings that they do both at the level of inter-category and intra-category workers irrespective of sex.

Interpersonal behavioural relationship of the women workers in this category too is cordial creating a congenial atmosphere in office. Here, owing to such an atmosphere and also owing to the freedom of work that is there, the women feel that they are rather at home. The most notable is the tie of common professional interest that links and binds them up as a community of workers within a smaller universe of office. The resultant feature that could be easily identified is esteemed friendship and freeness with male workers, not to be readily found among the women employed in general offices connected with civil administration.

While discussing about working environment another aspect needs to be taken into account. This is about the situation in which working women gets involved in extra official activities concerning the office. The situation can perhaps be best described as a secondary involvement within the primary one. It is known that trade union activities are a regular feature of the organisations under organised sector of employment. Apart from this, there are other organisations either for recreation or for other beneficial purposes, e.g., co-operative society and the like.

The employees are well aware that their rights and demands can be established not by individual efforts but through trade unionism. Be she just a new entraint or quite an old one, all are conscious about their rights of trade unionism conferred upon them by the Constitution. For this very fact, almost all the employees of any organisation keep connection with their respective trade union organisations. The connection is mostly in the form of keeping their names in the roll of ordinary membership only. Excepting actute exigencies, the working women do not spend time in organisational matters of the trade union. Exceptions are there, and in fact we could discover that out of a sample of 424 working women only a few (1.2%) informants were taking active role and spending some time in such affairs. Enquiry revealed that although they do not deny the importance of trade unionism, but owing to their greater need for their presence at home they cannot spend time in doing extra official activities beyond office hours.

Job Preference and Satisfaction

We have thus seen that women are engaged in gainful employment in various kinds of establishments outside home. The jobs in which they are actually engaged in may be grouped into three major categories on the basis of the nature of job for the purpose of analysis and treatment of data. This has already been done. However, considering the nature and variety of jobs that constitute the entire spectrum of work situations, one would indeed be interested in asking first the question : what kind of job do they feel appropriate for women; and whether the women employees had in their mind any special liking or preference for some specific kind of job. If the analysis bears out that they really nurtured some preference for particular type of job over others in which they have currently been employed circumstantially, then there will arise a very pertinent follow up question. This is regarding their state of mind and attitude towards the job they are engaged in. To assess this mental state the basic questions that may be asked are: have the women any preference for job? If they are employed in a job which is not to their preference or liking, have they been able to satisfy themselves with what they are doing?

For the purpose of analysis Table 2.17 has been prepared. It could be seen that a good majority of informants, about 49 per cent, has expressed the feeling that teaching is appropriate for women. A considerable number of informants again, roughly in the order of 16 per cent, has expressed their preference either for solely teaching or teaching together with such organisational jobs that lie within the purview of academic institution. On the whole, around two-third of the informants gave vent to their feeling of preference for teaching or such jobs that concern with an academic body.

Table 2.17 : Job preference*

Category	Teaching		Teaching and allied job		Any job	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
All	207	48.8	66	15.6	80	18.9
Teacher	96	66.2	8	5.5	23	15.9
Office worker	75	43.6	19	11.0	32	18.6
Technical personnel	36	33.6	39	36.4	25	23.4

* Sundries have not been included

The preference for teaching profession seems to have grown from social traditions. The bias towards this has developed largely from the very basic reason that the profession has had the silent approval of society. This is one. But there appears to be still another vital cause for the women's preference for teaching profession. The profession utilises the skill of nurturance, empathy and competence, where aggressiveness and competitiveness are rather disfunctional. Moreover, there is possibly another factor, although apparently not enough serious but latent, the profession permits time for the women to look after their home and family satisfying fully the need of outside job. The jobs other than teaching were the result of a more recent trials and innovations. And these jobs, however, are yet to attain a flare and stature to the tune of the teaching profession. These are some of the more innate reasons, we believe, that can explain the working women's preference for the teaching profession.

There is yet another set of women workers (19%) which does not like to opt for any specific kind of job, including teaching. These women believe that they are competent to do the kind of work that are generally attributable to masculinity. They feel that they can even rise on the occasion and shoulder responsibility provided due opportunity is given, at par with men, in each and every field of work. The general consensus of this set of informants is that there should not be any sex-specific limitations as far as gainful employment outside home is concerned.

Apart from what has been just reported there are working women too, who stated their ideal preference for varied types of jobs, such as, any part-time job (1.4%), cottage industry (0.5%), interior decoration (0.7%), nursing and medicine (6.1%), social work (0.7%), any government service (2.6%), stenography and typing (2.8%), telephone operating (2.1%), etc. The women showing option for these sundry jobs together constitute approximately 17 per cent of the sample. For obvious reasons, the sundries have not been included in Table 2.17.

There is of course a departure that merits mention here. It is the case of women workers classified under technical personnel. It may be noted from the data in Table 2.17 that instead of teaching as usual with the other two categories of workers dealt with here, preference for teaching-cum-allied jobs is reported more by the technical personnel category which is around 36 per cent. Seemingly it appears plausible that the preference for teaching-cum-allied jobs by the technical personnel might be owing to one's egoistic demand and aspiration to cultivate the knowledge on specific field already gained through university education and to apply it as a career. For example, one, whose subject of study at the university level was Botany, would more likely prefer to opt for taking up a career in an organisation

dealing with her own line of specialisation. The hunch at the back of the mind is that she would be having adequate scope to cultivate and carry on the work in her own specific field of specialisation.

We have thus seen that the working women think teaching is appropriate for them. Under this mental orientation of the working women, it would be of interest to know whether they are satisfied with the job that they are doing. To analyse the situation of job satisfaction, Table 2.18 is set out. The significant information that comes into relief is that majority of working women (74.0%) could be seen satisfied with the jobs in which they are employed. At the same time the data bear out that about 22 per cent of the working women under investigation is not satisfied with the jobs they are having. There is a small group, between these two extremes, which is partly satisfied with the jobs (4.0%). This information is true for the working women when considered as a whole.

Table 2.18 : Job satisfaction

Category	Satisfied		Partly satisfied		Not satisfied	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
All	314	74.0	17	4.0	93	21.9
Teacher	117	80.7	11	7.6	17	11.7
Office worker	118	68.6	5	2.9	49	28.5
Technical Personnel	79	73.8	1	0.9	27	25.2

The analysis of the data brings out that there are various factors that generate dissatisfaction among the working women. The causes could be identified as follows. These are :

1. no proper recognition of performance,
2. no betterment of service condition,
3. stagnation in same post,
4. no liberty in work,
5. poor pay structure,
6. stereotype nature of work,
7. monotony of syllabus in educational institutions,
8. no chance of further study, and
9. incongenial environment.

The samples of different occupational categories may now be considered for evaluating the situation of job satisfaction. A study of the Table 2.18 immediately shows that 81 per cent of women engaged in teaching are satisfied with their job. The proportion of satisfied informants decreases steadily from teaching profession to technical personnel and thence to the office worker group. This clearly implies that those who are engaged in teaching are comparatively more satisfied in their jobs than those engaged in the other two categories. As expected, the office workers are least satisfied compared to other two groups.

Further, on analysis of the data at our disposal one thing comes out to sharper focus. This is about the overwhelming preference for teaching job. Theoritically speaking, if so many working women long for teaching job, or any other specific kind of job, the motivation to work in a job other than their preferred ones would get a setback. But, as a matter of fact, the gap between job preference and actual performance may be ascribed as a gap, so to say, between theory and practice or ideal and reality. In these days of unemployment crisis one can hardly sit tight and stick to the ideal of accepting a job unless and until it is upto her expectation. Rather, chance is an important criterion in this regard. Moreover, as pointed out earlier, education, opportunity to avail of the required education, age, etc, may also be considered to play a viable role in this matter. All the more, happiness and satisfaction are related with psychological make up of the mind.

Aspiration and Attitude

Aspiration is one of the vital dimensions of life. It is vital because without understanding it appropriately drawing of a holistic profile of the world of working women in Calcutta would just be incomplete. To evaluate it is really a difficult task because the feelings for it is a matter which is not quantifiable. Nevertheless, we are to attempt understanding this qualified parameter through a kind of abstraction. One way of abstraction could be a study of case histories, which in turn lead us to form an image about the dimension and level of aspiration.

One Mrs. D, who represented the category of office worker, was serving in a Central Government Office. She entered in service before her marriage and was aged 32 years. She said :

> "I am a permanent Government servant. Both of us, my husband and myself, are working in Calcutta. But now that he has been transferred to Cochin. I will have to accompany him. Otherwise, he will be in difficulty in managing himself. Since a permanent Government employee can avail of leave without pay for a period of

five years at a stretch, I am thinking of availing of the opportunity. I know my seniority, promotion, etc., will be hampered during my period of absence on leave. But what to do? After all I can't neglect my family nor I can resign from service. Because once I resign, I will not get my job back. So I will try to continue my service in this way."

One Mrs. M, aged 49, an officer in a revenue earning department of Government of India, reported : "I am not a born officer. I joined here as an employee of lower cadre at the age of 22. Only when my hairs have started turning grey I have become an officer through promotion."

One Mrs. L, a school teacher, aged 39, expressed:

"I had been working as a teacher in a Railway High School at Kharagpur (located about 116 km. away from Calcutta) for a pretty long time. I got married while I was there. My husband is working in Calcutta. In order to lead a conjugal life I felt it necessary to come down to Calcutta and be with my husband. I tried for a transfer to a Railway High School in the near vicinity of Calcutta. But I could only succeed in getting a transfer to a Railway Primary School. In lieu, I had to suffer a lot. Coming down to a teachership in a primary school from a high school level, I had to sustain immediately a loss of status, position and money as well".

These are but only a few examples that have been illustrated here. Even then they are quite forceful in forming an image of the bent of mind of the working women, in general. It is that the Bengalee working women are not really much aspirant. One of the most likely pragmatic reasons operating on their back, for not being aspirant, might be a strong attachment to family life and home. This pull of family life does not give them adequate scope to pursue a career.

Further analysis of the material clearly brings to focus that the service career of the working women is rather montonous, plain. Changing over from one to another job occurs very seldom. The general bulk of the working women is seen to have entered into a service in lower cadre. But there are also exceptions which show that a very negligible minority of the working women have been inducted straight way to the higher categories of posts.

But the fate of bulk of the working women seems to be destined for jobs at the assistant level. Once they have been absorbed at that level, their lot remains unchanged for a considerable period of time. A change of their lot is mostly associated with the change of position. This can only be effected through promotion in the service career. And since, among others, seniority of position in the cadre matters most for promotion, the occasion

of promotion is generally infrequent during one's service period. They are thus stagnant and saturated. But they are perhaps least bothered about this state. Moreover, they do not mind sacrificing many a benefits of the service career only for the sake of maintaining a stable and harmonious family life. The empirical analysis goes to show that 93.2 per cent of working women are serving the same offices where they began their career. The remainder, however, have left their parent office and joined elesewhere. The causes of such switch over were not necessarily determined or guided by aspiration alone. In order to have an idea in this regard two case histories, given below, appear helpful.

One Miss B, aged 28 years, was a stenographer employed in a nationalised bank. She said:

"This is the second office that I am serving now. Previously, I had been in a Government office as a stenographer. The total emoluments is better here with the bank compared to what I used to earn in the Govern ment organisation. For this reason, I left the Government service and availed of the job in bank.

Another Mrs. S., aged 35, also went for a change. She told: I was a teacher in a non-Government college of a mofussil town. When opportunity came I did not hesitate to accept the post of Assistant Headmistress in a Government school of wide reputation. While serving in the mofussil college I did not use to get my salary regularly. By accepting the new job in a Government school the problem is solved."

These two case histories that have been cited here give us ground for admitting that change in service cannot always necessarily be correlated with the drive of aspiration. It could be as well for security reason and more generally for improving the pecuniary condition.

We have already collected definitive information that women are accepting jobs either out of economic need or emotional one. We are also aware of the fact that large number of women (74.0%) are quite satisfied with their respective jobs (c.f. Table 2.18). All these, indeed, lead towards a positive indication of their favourable attitude towards employment. Moreover, care was taken to unfold the mind of working women, the mind that swings between the two accepted diametrical roles, role of a housewife and that of a working woman. It may be worthwhile to enquire into as to what role they do feel more important. Since married women are expected to be subject to more encumberance with their two roles, their views call for our attention and analysis. It is apparent from the data that almost half of the married women (49%) informants recognise the importance

of both the roles equally. And of the rest, about 46 per cent show much inclination for domestic work alone. Those who share that work alone is important are rather insignificant in number (4.7%).

We are all well aware that there are, indeed, diversities among the working women. Some are prone to change and some are not, while others may go along with these two situations together. This expectation is reflected in the analysis of the present data. We have noted already that nearly half (46.3%) of the working women considers home as the ideal corner to live in. It implies that this group of women believes that house keeping is the primary duty of women. At the same time, we could identify another group of working women comprising 49 per cent of the sample under study, which considers both the roles, 'at home' and 'at the place of work', as equally important. They are earning, they are gaining pleasure out of work, as such work is no longer of secondary importance to them. At the same time, they cannot or does not want to ignore the family, the joys and sorrows of family life. It is the feeling of self-conscious, self-assertive section of working women who are quite aware of their footing, their position in the social milieu. And it is only a few dogmatic personality (4.7%), who claimed work as more important alike their male counterpart.

Discussion

We have so long tried to gather and dwell upon the materials that have direct bearing in profitably understanding the prospects and problems connected with work situation of middle class working women in Calcutta. By that we have been able to bring to a sharper focus some of the important dimensions that are connected intimately with the problem on which we are hovering at.

Not enough long back, as history tells us, the middle class Bengalee women had a world of their own—a world that was very much secluded and confined silently within the frame of four walls of their home. Taking up gainful employment outside home by the middle class women can rather be considered very rightly as a recent innovation. The introduction of it can definitely be traced to at the national upsurge in India with the achievement of Independence in 1947. It may be recalled at this moment that this political change over immediately ushered a series of change in many facets of Indian life and civilisation, notable being in the economic and sociocultural aspects. The sudden change in economic sphere of the country has caused directional change in social and cultural life of the people. And taking up employment outside home by the middle class women themselves adequately bespeaks of a palpable change—a change, over the traditional past.

In course of time, the middle class working women, by and large, have given rise to a separate class by itself—a class comprising "white collar", salaried workers in the organised sector of workforce. And that this emerging class is growing faster in number can very well be vouched from their increasing rate of participation in employment under the organised sector.

Once they have accepted the changing situation the middle class working women are ceaselessly trying to explore and lay their hands in all possible fields of employment hitherto remaining virtually closed to them. To try to talk about the nature, what perhaps comes uppermost in mind is the significant involvement of the middle class women in the field of teaching, clerical jobs, medical/health services, and technical jobs. The range of professional entities is thus, indeed, not small. Without concerning to the individual professional entities, for they, it may be appreciated, would not independently be of much help in understanding, we have necessarily pooled them and considered the entities under three major occupational categories. These are, namely, teacher, office worker (executive and ministerial staff), and technical personnel. The inference that could be drawn upon was based on the analysis of the opinion and views expressed by informants whose mean age was estimated at 35.41 years. The informants again comprised both unmarried and ever-married women, the ratio being 40 : 60.

But why do women work? This is a matter which perhaps bothers us much at the very outset. The reasons are real and many. But these can be treated conveniently for analysis under two major factors : the economic and the emotional. The former, as a matter of fact, is primary, and the latter secondary. The survey has effectively brought to relief that nearly 62 per cent of the informants of the present survey took up jobs due to economic pressure, whereas the rest went for job mostly to fulfill their emotional cravings. Some of the studies available on the topic (*e.g.*, Aurora *et al.* 1963, Verma 1964, Jauhari 1970, Srivastava 1972) go to show that an absolute majority of women, ranging from 57 through 67 per cent took up employment due alone to economic pressure. Kapur (1970), who also finds that economic reason is the prime force for drawing highest percentage of women in the labour force, has tried to classify the economic reason in somewhat a detailed manner. She finds that the main motives of taking up employment by women were as follows :

(*i*) gross economic necessity (10.7%),

(*ii*) to supplement father's/husband's income (33.7%),

(*iii*) to have independent income of one's own (12.0%), and

(*iv*) charm of the profession, to make use of high education (21.2%).

Vasantakumar (1964) shows that the economic factor, desire for self expression and independence are the reasons to be counted most. In a more or less similar line, Goldstein (1972) tries to attach more importance to the following reasons :

(*i*) to keep busy (37%),
(*ii*) to make use of one's education (19%),
(*iii*) desire for economic independence (13%),
(*iv*) desire to provide service to others (12%), and
(*v*) interest in particular field of employment (6%).

But all said and done, there is undoubtedly a definitive and progressive change in women's position. They have become a potential bread-winner and thus economically contributing towards the family. At times they are also shouldering the whole economic responsibility of the family, if necessity demands so. Otherwise, they are certainly augmenting the income of the family. Thus, it may very clearly be realised that they have acquired an economic footing previously they never had.

That majority of women do join the working force solely in response to basic economic necessity, is quite understandable. Yet the quest remains about those, seemingly not a negligible section but constituting about 40 per cent of the whole, who have strengthened the work force for reasons other than mere economic reason. Analysis of the reasons for taking up jobs adequately portrays the bent of mind of this section of middle class women. It must indeed be appreciated as a corollary that this section is effectively contributing towards changing the cultural milieu. Needless to say that they had a clean option to be or not to be bread-winners. But the fact, it may be argued upon, that they have volunteered for it, in order to satisfy their bare egoistic emotions, can certainly be counted as an evidence in favour of their changed world view.

Bulk of the women (73.8%), who had taken up employment before their marriage, are still continuing with their respective jobs although many of them have no compelling economic necessity for continuing with the job. Asha Bharadwaj (1963) also has shown that 61.1 per cent of women continue with their jobs after marriage. In this regard two more studies, one by Mahajan (1966) and the other by C. T. Kannan (1963), give figures for the continuance as 66.7 and 45 per cents respectively. The fact of continuance in service even after marriage in other way indicates that the middle class women have directionally changed their outlook and had been able to adopt themselves to the emergent situation. At any rate, it could be deciphered, marriage has not really imposed any bar either for taking up employment or for continuing it even. It may be borne in mind that continuity in service

after marriage would not have been possible at all without a clear understanding and approval of husbands and their families. Notable in this context is the fact that husbands and families have accepted the new situation and have helped the working women to adjust themselves in the new situation. As a result, the working women have slowly but effectively, both consciously and unconsciously, adapted to the working environment. They do not mind working side by side with male colleagues, nor do they mind joining issues with men in such extra official activties like those connected with trade unionism. Although in such activities, doubtless, in majority of cases, their role is mostly a passive one, there are yet a few over exuberant women who ride on.

Age and education definitely have a direct association with the type of employment. The women workers generally have the feeling that their office atmosphere is not such that really concerns them much. Hierarchy and bureaucracy, they say are very much there, and as a part of the whole complex these have to exist. But the point to be concerned here is that most women have accepted the normative situation and oriented themselves in maximising their adaptive responses. This is, so to say, the general condition of office atmosphere in which the middle class working women of Calcutta are trying to match and settle in. More or less, a feeling of satisfaction in office atmosphere felt by the women workers in Bombay has been reported by Aurora and others (1963). The survey was conducted among the unmarried working girls employed as typists, clerks, receptionists and telephone operators there.

To come to the question of job preference, it could be seen that, irrespective of jobs they are engaged in, about half of the sample (49%) expressed their desire that teaching as a profession they preferred most. They fervently believe teaching is the appropriate profession, for it is more suited to their temperament, taste and ability. There is a case in point now. Of the sample, a good number of informants (19%) appear to be more progressive in mind since they vented their feeling out that they can, and should, serve suitably in any category of work they know of. Their unbiased attitude to any particular type of occupation is a positive indication of change. But this is not all. The unmistakable sign of continuity do not escape our attention. The overwhelming perference for teaching may be ascribed to factors like long standing social sanction and availability of enough time at hand to look after family. That is why they like this economic pursuit most which, by virtue of its character, provides them with enough time to fulfill their traditional role of a home-maker.

Although this is the general picture about job preference, majority of the working women (75%) have been seen to be quite complacent with

their jobs in hand (though not all are working as teachers). The difference between preference for and satisfaction in jobs can be almost like the difference that is there between theory and practice or, say, between hypothesis and reality.

One thing becomes clear, however, that women workers are not really very much aspirant. The level of it is in general not high but rather their feet are well set on ground of realitily.

When they were drawn into a serious question like attitude, an interesting pheonomenon could be deciphered. Women, to the order of 46 per cent, have expressed that they like home more than work. Quite evident an idea, of course, since work is a new phenomenon and they are basically traditionally oriented. Almost half of the informants (49%) really show much concern equally for both home and work. They consider office work as equally important as work in home. They do not want to neglect any vital aspect of life, rather like to give equal balance of weight on either side. Their love for both the facets is absolutely genuine, since they want to have one not at the cost of other. This goes to prove, they like the change, accept it, and at the same time they attach due value to the old ways of life.

CHAPTER THREE

Women at Home

THE FAMILY OF THE WORKING WOMEN

In characterizing a society, be it ancient or modern, there are two necessary elements. The elements are somewhat closely interwoven. One is the economic system, the other is the family system. And since, in the preceding chapter, we have dealt with adequately how women are connected with the economic system, it would be worthwhile to examine, in the context of this newly acquired economic role, how they behave in this situation within their family environment.

The institution of family is a universal phenomenon. Normally human beings are so intimate with the institution that they generally feel no urge to define it whatsoever. But, culturally, as a social entity, it needs to be defined and clarified objectively. To this count, various authorities have attempted to explore the field differentially, laying emphasis on one or the other aspects of the institution.

Following Bernard Farber (1966), if we assume the family as a collective enterprise based on relationship defined by birth and marriage, we do not find the families covered by this survey as structurally homogeneous. There are mainly two structural types—the joint or extended family, and the nuclear one. There is a third type, the less defined compound family type, which is possibly a derivative of either the extended or the nuclear family.

The joint or extended family is seen to have composed of two distinct varieties: lineally extended, and collaterally extended depending upon its very nature of extension. The former is constituted by the extension of nuclear family through marriage of children and subsequent grand children. The latter type is formed by the horizontal extension of nuclear families. The nuclear family essentially comprises husband, wife and their unmarried children. Besides these two family types there appears to be a third type. It is somewhat compound in nature. Since ours is a patriarchal society

with patrilocal residence, extension of families is generally effected through male descent. Inclusion of members through female line is but a deviation. It thus makes the normative structure of the family rather a complicated and compound one.

Analysis of the material gives evidence that the nuclear family is more dominant in distribution over the other types of family composition. The nuclear family, in its ideal form, is found to represent some 36 per cent of the total families of middle class working women. A few variant forms of nuclear families have also been considered in the category, after adopting the views of Takashi Koyama (1964) and P. K. Dasgupta (1966) with necessary modifications. For instance, it may be illustrated here that in the sample there are newly wedded couples, childless couples and also couples having no child living with them.

There is a marginal difference between the family and household. While the former is necessarily a conjugal unit, the latter is not always so. The event of death or divorce might have disrupted the family structure, which no longer remains essentially a conjugal unit. For the present purpose, it is all such categories of households that have been gathered here together and treated consolidately under the structure of nuclear family (Table 3.1).

They are threaded together since, in essence, they appear basically nuclear in orientation. Thus by extension it could be seen that nuclear family constitutes 57 per cent of the total families. The break up is as follows:

(*i*) Family of husband and wife with their unmarried child/children	35.7%
(*ii*) Family of husband and wife	6.1%
(*iii*) Family of widow, widower or divoroced with unmarried child/children	12.5%
(*iv*) Family or unmarried siblings	2.6%

It may be noted here that in Kapur's (1970) study the corresponding figure of nuclear family is 44 per cent.

Let us turn our attention now to joint family, which ranks next in order of dominance, being 39 per cent. Of the joint family the lineally extended family has a greater generation depth, namely three or more. Here the members are lineally related, comprising mainly the head of the family, his sons and grandsons. Some 31 per cent of families are found to be in this category. On the other hand, the fraternal extended family type comprises mainly the head of the family and his brothers. Here the relationship is of a collateral type. In this category some 8 per cent families can be

accounted for. In Table 3.1, the various types of combinations of these families have also been recorded.

Table 3.1 : Family type and composition

Type of Family	Sl. No.	Composition of the Family	No. of families: Teachers	Office Worker	Technical Personnel	All	Per cent
Nuclear Family (n 241)	1.	Husband and Wife	5	14	7	26	10.8
	2.	Husband and Wife with unmarried child/ children	55	73	23	151	62.6
	3.	Widow, widower or divorced with unmarried child/children	14	19	20	53	22.0
	4.	Unmarried siblings	5	5	1	11	4.6
Extended family Vertical extension (n 131)	5.	Husband and wife with married son/s	21	12	11	44	33.6
	6.	One of the parents with married son/s	28	27	29	84	64.1
	7.	One of the parents with married son and grand-son	—	1	—	1	0.8
	8.	Husband and wife with married son and widow daughter	—	—	2	2	1.5
Extended family Horizontal extension (n 33)	9.	Husband and wife with husband's unmarried brother and sister	8	4	7	19	57.6
	10.	Husband and wife with husband's married brother	4	2	3	9	27.3
	11.	Husband and wife with husband's widow sister	2	1	—	3	9.0
	12.	Husband and wife with husband's brother's son	—	2	—	2	6.1
Compound family (n 18)	13.	Husband and wife with wife's widow mother	—	1	—	1	5.5
	14.	Husband and wife with wife's unmarried sister	2	3	3	8	44.4
	15.	Husband and wife with wife's unmarried sister and widow mother	—	1	—	1	5.5
	16.	Husband and wife with wife's parents and wife's uncle	—	—	1	1	5.5
	17.	Husband and wife with wife's widow sister	1	1	—	2	11.1
	18.	Husband and wife with wife's sister's daughter	—	2	—	2	11.1
	19.	Husband and wife with married son and his widow mother-in-law	—	1	—	1	5.5

Table 3.1 (*contd*)

20.	One of the parents (mother) with married sons, married daughter and her brother's son	—	1	—	1	5.5
21.	Mother's brother's son's wife, her children and ego	—	1	—	1	5.5

A single family of atypical nature has been excluded from the above table since it does not stand in confornity with any of the compositions mentioned here. The composition of the family is, however, husband, wife, unmarried children, maried daughter and unmarried granddaughters.

The third type, as already noted, consists of compound family. Its varieties, types No. 13 through 21, have been recorded in Table 3.1. Compound family is seen to represent 4.2 per cent of the total families. The proportion is quite nominal indeed.

It is perhaps now time to examine the situation of the various types of family compositions that we have come across. We know that one of the peculiarities of the Indo-Aryan culture lay in the uniqueness of joint family system. Also we are aware that with the passage of time the structure of family has undergone change. The change has occurred from joint family system to the nuclear family. This transformation is primarily due to the effect of industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation. The traditional joint family system had to make room for the newly emerging nuclear form. And today the existence of nuclear family is no longer bleak but rather on firm footing.

It appears worthwhile in this context to recall the view expressed by Kapadia (1959). He has emphasized two possibilities that are associated with taking up of gainful employment by women. These are:

(*i*) that it (employment) may affect the joint family adversely, and

(*ii*) it may strengthen the joint family.

The views are distinctively contrasting. Unfortunately, it is hard for us to stand by to any of the possibilities forwarded by Kapadia. Because our scope was not there to farther information on past history of the ego's family. Analysis of family data, of course, clearly shows a marked preponderance of nuclear family over the joint family. But there is an interesting point which merits mention here. When the working women's attitude towards the various family structure is analysed, it comes out that 50 per cent of the working women show inclination for the joint family.

Functionally, both the set ups have merits and demerits. The contenders of nuclear family hold that the present socio-economic condition posed several vital constraints for the maintenance of the joint family. For example, the informants say, all the earning members do not share the economic responsibility equally. This creates an air of dissatisfaction among all the members within a joint family. Consequently, there is lack of appreciation of interpersonal relationship between the members, which takes away peace and generates tension. The state of the situation becomes further deteriorated owing to lack of central control by one having strong personality. The situation is very trying for the working women, especially the married ones. Their attitude is that it is rather hard to satisfy one and all the members at a time, including the in-laws. They feel that they could not be a part of decision making even in personal matters, and as a sequal the growth of personality becomes rickety. And, on the top of it, they believe that one cannot rear child as per her own wish and likings. The strong feeling is that if they are to maintain a cordial relationship with the other members of the family, it is better to part away with their husbands and children only.

The veteran supporters of the joint family, on the other hand, advocate that the security, believed to be an important feature, is very well there in the joint family. They maintain that nuclear family certainly transforms one to become individualistic and self-centred, making her unfit socially. However, all the supporters of joint family are not really stark blind. Many of them share the views of supporters of nuclear family. They are for the joint family because of a single reason. This is relating to upbringing of their children. They believe, since children are their stake in future, their well being is a matter of paramount importance that should concern both to society and to them personally as well.

At any rate, from our data, it may be said that the joint family and the nuclear family do exist side by side. Kapadia (1959) has stated, there is a change in the structure of joint family, the vertical one predominating over the horizontal one. To this view, the present finding lends a strong support. In this connection it is worthwhile to recall Ross's (1961) view. She has pointed out that nuclearity of family provides opportunity to women for taking up employment.

Let us now take up the case of compound family. The analysis has revealed that this type of compound family was formed to adjust and cope up with the situation that had arisen out of one's employment outside home. The necessity of this family arose owing to the bringing up of children of the working mothers. In the case of nuclear family the children of the working mothers are to be left to the care of hired persons, whereas the elderly

persons of the joint family take care of children. To solve the problem of nuclear family for the specific reason of looking after children, the nuclear family, of necessity, had to identify and pick up a member of her father's family, usually unmarried sister, as a temporary 'adhesion'. Besides, in the compound family under certain compelling circumstances, the working women's mother along with her dependent children is found to reside jointly. However, as could be seen from Table 3.1, such cases are few in number. This is the picture about the various structures of family that could be discerned from the material at our disposal.

It would be of interest now to have an idea about the size of family. The nuclear family, as already noted, is the dominant type. And we cannot obviously expect too large a size for it. The extended families, in comparison to the former, are considerably larger.

An average family size is estimated at 5.07 persons per family from the present material. The family size is, therefore, medium, according to the classification followed by the decennial censuses. Out of the 424 families in the sample, 97 (about 23%) have the size of 4 members only. Of the total, about 67 per cent of families have members ranging from 2 to 5 (Table 3.2). Incidentally it may be noted that according to the decennial census of 1961 the average size of the family is 4.89 (Ray 1966). Perhaps another point may be made here as a reason of small size of nuclear families. It is the adoption of family planning. The women, who favour adoption of such measures for limiting the size of families irrespective of their marital status, are seen to be in the order of 86 per cent.

Table 3.2 : Family size

No. of persons	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
2	42	9.9	15	10.3	17	9.9	10	9.3
3	70	16.5	26	17.9	23	13.4	21	19.6
4	97	22.9	40	27.6	38	22.1	19	17.8
5	75	17.7	22	15.2	32	18.6	21	19.6
6	41	9.7	17	11.7	19	11.0	5	4.7
7	40	9.4	11	7.6	12	6.9	17	15.9
8	23	5.4	4	2.8	16	9.3	3	2.8
9	14	3.3	6	4.1	5	2.9	3	2.8
10	6	1.4	1	0.7	2	1.2	3	2.8
11	6	1.4	2	1.4	2	1.2	2	1.9
12	5	1.2	1	0.7	4	2.3	—	—
13	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14	3	0.7	—	—	1	0.6	2	1.9
15	2	0.5	—	—	1	0.6	1	0.9
Total	424	100.0	145	100.0	172	100.0	107	100.0

Interpersonal Relationship

The smallest core unit of a society is the conjugal unit—the family. It is also known that this basic institution helps maintaining a smooth and sustained interpersonal relationship internally between and among its members. To save it from disintegration and for its smooth functioning as well, it is expected that there should be a cordiality and mutual understanding amongst the members. Therefore, interactions in the family, which is rather a round the clock affair, must be harmonious and in good tune. The problem that concerns us here is to know whether taking up job outside home has any effect on the interpersonal relationship within the family. For this matter, three cardinal interpersonal relationships have been considered. These are: between husband and wife; between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law; and between mother and children.

In trying to analyse the issue one way is to work on a hypothesis. That relationship will affect adversely if taking up employment outside home by a woman is being seriously objected to and looked down upon by the members of the family.

For testing the hypothesis we may begin with abstracting the evidence from information available through generations time. Analysis testifies immediately that the history of taking up gainful employment by the middle class working women of our sample could be traced back over to the depth of three generations time. Although the percentage of such women participating in work force is seemingly quite low (0.7%), being still significant. The proportion of those who took up employment two generations ago is only four per cent. And about 30 per cent women of informant's families have the precedence of participating in employment outside home. If working outside did affect interpersonal relationship adversely within the family straining the atmosphere, then it would have been likely that women could not go for employment. Rather they should have, in the interest of the family, remained confined strictly within the four walls of their homes. But as already noted earlier, the reality of today is that women are increasingly participating in work force (cf. Table 2.3). From this factor alone it can be argued upon that there cannot be any serious charge against adverse interpersonal relationship.

Further analysis of the material shows that in 66.5 per cent cases the informants happen to be the first women in the family to take up gainful employment. They had not been generally objected to for taking up job, nor their interpersonal relationship was affected for this. Of course, exception is there and it is in a few cases only (3.3%), where relationship has been strained with the older persons. The persons of older generation, like grandmother or grandfather, or sometimes distant relatives, generally put objections to working outside because they could not shed their traditional views.

Let us now examine the interpersonal relationship *vis-a-vis* different family types and also marital condition. To come to the family type nuclear family, which is predominant, concerns us first. It is seen that parents of the nuclear families do not normally object to their daughters going for and accepting the job. They consider such employment as a real economic boon. On many occasions the parents, in fact, encouraged their daughters for seeking a job.

Further, it may be noted that in 56.47 per cent cases men married women who were already employed gainfully. From the information gathered in Table 3.3, we may evaluate the mutual behaviour of couples on the issue of wife's employment. What comes out sharply is that only a very small percentage of husbands (2.9%) opposes wife's taking up employment. This is almost true for all the working women irrespective of their nature of employment. The balance of weight is heavier towards accepting wife's job. It is roughly in the order of 23 per cent, and there could be found no difference among the different occupational categories. The underlying reasons for this may be stated as follows : (*i*) economic support, either to maintain livelihood or for a better standard of living, (*ii*) taking pride for working wife, (*iii*) believe in women's liberty and economic independence, and (*iv*) taking cognisance of wife's desire.

Table 3.3 : Husband's attitude towards wife's employment

	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Well accepted	57	23.4	21	24.4	23	22.3	13	23.6
Accepted	150	61.5	51	59.3	65	63.1	34	61.8
Accepted but not liked	15	6.1	5	5.8	6	5.8	4	7.3
Indifferent	15	6,1	7	8.1	5	4.8	3	5.4
Opposed	7	2.9	2	2.3	4	3.9	1	1.9
Total	244	100.0	86	99.9	103	99.9	55	99.9

As far as the children are concerned the following reactions about the working mother could be identified. These are :

(*i*) some children are too little to react,

(*ii*) some of the grown up children feel happy about it since they could get things desired by them quite easily from their earning mothers, and

(*iii*) again some children feel unhappy because they could not get constant company of their mothers.

What thus precipitates that, on the whole, taking up employment is not being objected to or looked down upon.

In the extended families there are the in-laws. And in a family the relationship with mother-in-law is of utmost importance. Generally, the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is not always pleasant. But the irony is that although they keep their fingers crossed, the mother-in-law more often support employment of daughter-in-law. At the back of this, of course, lies the economic crisis of the family concerned. One of the informants has very categorically expressed that it is only due to the urge of her mother-in-law that she had to take up employment. Again there are some mothers-in-law who do not like to see their educated daughters-in-law to sit quiet at the corner of home, wasting their work potential. This is one side of the picture. The other side portrays that there is a group of mother-in-law, which expects same degree of attention, devotion and time from a working daughter-in-law, as is normally expected from a non-working daughter-in-law. Despite all zeal and sincerity, meeting of this demand is hardly possible by the working daughters-in-law for obvious reasons. On the contrary, the working women, after labouring outside for the whole day, expects attention and considerate attitude from their in-laws. This causes deterioration in interpersonal relationship.

There is again a mixed interpersonal reaction among the relatives of a working lady. Money begets some extra obligations and expectations. The poorer relatives expect some sort of help either in cash or in kind. And if they get it, they feel happy, naturally. Some appreciate the situation while others are jealous and envy as both husband and wife are earning. They allege "modern women has greed for money."

On the basis of the evidence that could be gathered above, it may be argued upon that, on the whole, in the absence of any tenable objection from family members for participating in work force outside home by woman, the interpersonal relationship be accepted as cordial and in conformity with the expected normal behavioural pattern.

Economic Role

Women are playing a vital role at various levels of economic activities of the family since time immemorial. And that is why Feldman (1958) defines the middle class working women as a potent economic, psychological, and sociological force. Our own empirical finding is important for pinpointing the extent of specific role of middle class working women in economic activities of the family.

The data that have been gathered in Table 3.4 supply information that in 14 per cent cases the family entirely depends on the earning of working women, while in about 19 per cent cases it does not depend at all. These, however, represent two clear cut extreme groups. One has evidently an acute role to play in the family economy while the other's role is minimal. Between these two extreme ends, there are working women who extend their helping hands in strengthening and toning up the family economy. They, of course, utilise it in a well-coded form. For example, 14 per cent women merge their income entirely with the common family fund (including some who are the sole earning members of the family). And some 67 per cent women utilise their income to meet specific expenditures already allocated for them, say, house rent, or children's education, and day-to-day shopping of raw food materials.

It could further be seen that, of the three occupational categories the women considered under office workers are economically more hard pressed. Table 3.4 reveals that the families of 21.5 per cent office workers depend fully on the earning of working women, while 10.3 per cent and 7.5 per cent families belonging to teaching and technical personnel respectively are fully dependent on working women's earning.

Table 3.4 : Dependence of the family on women's employment

Dependence	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Not at all	79	18.6	30	20.7	9	5.2	40	37.4
Partly	264	62.3	89	61.4	119	69.2	56	52.3
To a large extent	21	5.0	11	7.6	7	4.1	3	2.8
Fully	60	14.1	15	10.3	37	21.5	8	7.5
Total	424	100.0	145	100.0	172	100.0	107	100.0

While talking about the economic role of middle class working women, one interesting point needs mentioning. The data at hand weed out the general idea that married women are of no economic help to their parental families. It is seen (Table 3.5) that in about 6 per cent cases the entire income of working women is fully spent towards meeting the expenditure of their natal families, the families being fully dependent on the income of their working daughters. Apart from this responsibility, there are some who contribute, either regularly or occasionally, a part of their income towards parental family. This contribution is not in all the cases ascribable to real economic necessity. Sometimes the working women feel gratified to hand

over a small sum to their parents for their pocket expenses which remain unaccounted for.

Table 3.5 : Married women's contribution towards parental family

Contributing towards parental family	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Regularly	43	17.6	13	15.1	15	14.5	15	27.3
Occasionally	87	35.6	34	39.5	32	31.1	21	38.2
No at all	114	46.7	39	45.3	56	54.4	19	34.5

That they are controlling the family-fund and as well taking part in decision making in household affairs as far as the family budget and expenditure are concerned may be illustrated below. For the purpose of analysis, Table 3.6 has been drawn up. The information available in the table clearly brings out the fact that they happen to be the sole controller of their own earning in 49.8 per cent cases. Also in 21 per cent cases they enjoy the control of fund jointly with husband. Taking these two together gives a percentage of 71 per cent of the working women who have control over their own, hard earned money. The estimate available for self-control over money might sound very high. But it may be noted that it includes figures of self-control over money by both married (24.8%) and unmarried (25%) informants. The table further shows that in rest of the cases the control over family-fund lies solely with husbands, in case of married informants, and with others, in case of unmarried ones. The category of others here includes, in most cases, parents, elder brothers or sisters of the informants.

Table 3.6 : Control over money

Controller of purse	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Self	211	49.8	76	52.4	79	45.9	56	52.3
Self and husband	89	21.0	29	20.0	33	19.2	27	25.2
Husband	61	14.4	21	14.5	31	18.0	9	8.4
Others	63	14.8	19	13.1	29	16.9	15	14.0

This is more or less the general picture about the control over fund by the working women. This overall trend is also applicable to some extent to the women considered under three occupational categories. But if we examine this aspect in more details, the proportion of control would appear quite at variance,

Considering all the evidence laid down about there is no denying the fact that the middle class working women do have a definite role to play in the economy of the family, in particular, and of the society, in general.

Her Position at Home

Since the women are earning money and sharing some responsibility for shaping the economy of the family, they have gradually gained a more distinct status within the family. This is a change from what it was before three decades ago. The circumstances now current have given opportunity to the working women to rise on the occasion and voice their views and make comments that are taken well by all concerned. Today, by virtue of their contribution to the family economy, the working women have more grasp and control over many vital family matters and decisions. The economic independence, which they have gained through employment outside home, has, in fact, made them more conscious about their rights and privileges.

The following few jottings from their expressed views regarding their position at home seem to be enlightening : A clerk (38 years) who has put up a service of more than 15 years said, "My mother-in-law treats me well than before when I was not working." One lecturer in Physics of a Government Girls' College (aged 30 and married)) said, "More importance is given to my opinion in family discussions and disputes."

An Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy of another Government Girls' College (aged 52 and married) expressed, "Gradually they (family members) accepted me as an adult worthy of respect and they defer to my opinion." Another Professor and Head of the Department of History of a Girls' College said, "They (family members) are happy at me playing the role of a male member." A lady supervisor of Income Tax Department opined, "My employment has helped me a lot in maintaining my dignity in the eyes of my family members and relatives and definitely I earn more respect now from them."

"I get my experience and maturity rewarded even in my family life which I have gained through employment" was the view of a research associate (aged 40 and married) of a Central Government research organisation.

These are only some specific comments presented from a host of such similar views expressed by the working women. This, on the whole, indicates quite clearly that their economic independence has eventually raised their position quite significantly in the family.

Issue of Marriage

With the changing socio-economic conditions in India women started taking education in increasing numbers and eventually entering into salaried

jobs and professions. Thus they are exposed to changing beliefs and values. But has this anything to do with marriage? Let us probe into the matter. We already know that our data comprise both unmarried and evermarried women, their ratio being in the order of 40: 60. We further know that, of the total married women, about 74 per cent have entered service before marriage and they are continuing with it. We may, at this stage, attempt to elicit information whether after being self-sufficient economically the women wish to get themselves married. This is possible with the help of Table 3.7. It could be immediately seen from the table that majority (67.4%) of the unmarried working women want to get married. This is quite in tune with the natural biological instinct. Added to this, we know, women seek a home for they are traditionally bound down to it. There fore, it is likely that despite their taking up employment outside home they earnestly crave for a family and a home of their own. And this can only be possible through marriage.

Table 3.7 : Attitude of working women towards marriage

Attitude	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Willing to marry	114	67.4	30	55.5	49	72.0	35	74.5
Not willing to marry	35	20.7	18	33.3	10	14.7	7	14.9
Not yet decided	20	11.8	6	11.1	9	13.2	5	10.6
Total	169	99.9	54	99.9	68	99.9	47	100.0

It is about 21 per cent women who have decided not to marry at all. A break up of the entire sample makes it clear that the teaching category is responsible for holding the figure of 'not willing to marry' so high. In this respect, we must consider that about 39 per cent of women in the teaching category are in the 40+age group. Possibly these women might have lost their urge to marry due to their overage and that has caused a significant drop out. Again the score of about 13 per cent of 'not yet decided' among the office workers seems to be very high in comparison to the figures of other categories. But we must not forget that it is in the office worker category that about 19 per cent women are in the age group of 20-24, unlike other categories described here. And the average age at marriage of the entire sample is 24.8 years (Table 3.8). This figure is, however, more or less same for all the three professional categories.

Table 3.8 : Age at marriage

Category	No.	Range	Mean
All	255	15-40	24.8
Teacher	91	16-37	25.0
Office worker	104	15-37	24.2
Technical personnel	60	18-40	25.6

It would be of interest here to compare the estimated mean age at marriage of the general women population of India during 1961-71, which is 18.3 years (*The Indian Women & Statistical Profile 1975*). From Kapur's (1970) finding it is seen that the working women get married between the ages of 21 years and a little below 24 years.

However, we may take for granted from the present finding that working women are either already married or want to marry. Whom to marry is our next concern.

The Hindu society, which is based on castes and sub-castes, regulates marriage through rigid rules of caste endogamy. Marriage, in fact, is only permissible strictly within the frame of caste endogamy. This is the tradition of the Hindu society. Under this context if we examine our material we would find possibly a positive indication of a change in attitude of the educated middle class working women with respect to this rule of caste endogamy. Contrary to what have been there earlier, many women do not nourish and believe today that marriage should, always as a rule, be strictly contacted within one's own caste, province and religion. In Table 3.9, information about the attitude of middle class working women with respect to marriages of inter-caste, inter-religious and inter-provincial nature has been summarised. A close analysis of the inputs shows that majority of working women, to the tune of 68 per cent, have retained their orthodox outlook with respect to negotiating marriage. About one-third of the total respondents reflected a view other than the traditional way of looking into the things, preferring selection of a suitable marriage partner beyond the limit of caste endogamy. The informants belonging to this category believe that marriage does not necessarily, and always, mean just security, children and home. Today, they believe that it is more than that, encompassing a much wider horizon. It is the coming together of two individuals on equal terms, who are willing to have and give each other companionship, and lead a life through mutual understanding. Therefore, for them the question of caste and creed does not make much sense, indeed.

Table 3.9 : Attitude towards inter-caste, inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriage

Attitude	Unmarried		Married		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Favourable	54	32.0	80	31.4	134	31.6
Not favourable	115	68.0	175	68.6	290	68.4
Total	169	100.0	255	100.0	424	100.0

Table 3.10 : Attitude towards inter-caste, inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriages and marital condition

Attitude	Teacher						Office worker						Technical personnel					
	Unmarried		Ever married		Total		Unmarried		Ever married		Total		Unmarried		Ever married		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Favourable	20	37.0	22	24.2	42	29.0	16	23.5	28	26.9	44	25.6	18	38.3	30	50.0	48	44.8
Not Favourable	34	63.0	69	75.8	103	71.0	52	76.5	76	73.1	128	74.4	29	61.7	30	50.0	59	55.1

If we accept the expressions as noted in Table 3.10 as face value, the office workers are apparently more traditionally oriented in their outlook (74.4%) compared to the other two categories of working women.

Furthermore, it could be seen that the technical personnel have lesser regard for caste rigidity. This is, however, quite in the line of expectation, since the women of this occupational category have taken up jobs much later compared to other two occupational categories.

The information available in the table also tells about differences of opinion between the married and unmarried informants. One point must, however, be made clear here. Analysis of the attitude shows that not all the 34 informants, who have seemingly not taken a position in favour of social traditions, are equivocal in their stand when the question of marriage comes in with reference to caste, creed and religion. It could be noted that 11 informants of 34 have expressed opinion differentially. Among them again, five have favoured inter-caste marriage. One has expressed support for inter-caste and inter-provincial marriage but not inter-religious marriage. Another informant has supported inter-caste and inter-religious marriage but not inter-provincial marriage. There are still others who have objected marriage in a particular religious community or in a particular social group.

This is more or less the general attitude towards inter-caste, inter-provincial and inter-religious marriages. But it may be wondered what is the actual rate of occurrence of such marriages in the present sample for study. In order to analyse it the relevant material is laid out in Table 3.11. What we do find is that the rate of incidence of such marriages in our sample is rather low (18.4%) indeed than the notional expection (31.6%). There is a wide gap between the theory and practice, which is perhaps explainable. It is largely due to the fact that marriage depends not only on one's own choice but really depends upon many other pragmatic factors. It may be noted that the attitude has deviated from what could be found in traditional norm. The data presented here do suggest this view. This is certainly a drastic change of attitude and necessarily it would take a long time to stabilize.

Table 3.11 : Marriage by caste, creed and ethnicity

Marriage	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Within one's caste, creed and ethnic group	208	81.6	77	84.6	79	76.0	52	86.7
Not within one's caste, creed and ethnic group	47	18.4	14	15.4	25	24.0	8	13.3

The material arranged in Table 3.12 gives us adequate evidence that the incidence of inter-caste marriage is extremely high in comparison to other two types of marriages noted above. Now these sorts of marriages,

Table 3.12 : Occurrence of inter-caste, inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriage

Marriage	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Inter-caste	42	89.4	14	100.0	22	88.0	6	75.0
Inter-religious	2	4.2	—	—	—	—	2	25.0
Inter-ethnic	3	6.4	—	—	3	12.0	—	—

which are but deviation from the traditional norm, call for special interest. Because of the fact that there is a definite basis of assumption that these sorts of marriages are arranged by persons concerned, while in the negotiated marriages it is the guardians who play a dominant role. An analysis of the situation (Table 3.13) reveals that although in majority cases (76.6%) these types of marriages are self arranged, guardians of the working women do not stand in the way if they consider the selected grooms otherwise suitable. This indicates a change, might be minor in appearance, but major in signifi-cance. The table further reveals that the finding is more or less uniform, irrespective of the occupational categories, excepting, however, the technical personnel.

Table 3.13 : Mode of inter-caste inter-religious and inter-ethnic marriage

Mode	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Self-arranged	36	76.6	10	71.4	18	72.0	8	100.0
Negotiated	11	23.4	4	28.6	7	28.0	—	—

After all these, it becomes clear that inter-caste, inter-religious and inter-provincial marriages are mostly self-arranged. But at the same time it must not be taken for granted as a rule that self-arranged marriage means always marriages of the above mentioned types. It can very well be within one's own caste and creed. The situation may best be evaluated from the data in Table 3.14. It shows that although marriage through negotiation is the general practice and therefore records a high preponderance (63.5%), selfarranged marriage is also making headway (36.5%). It is also clear and obvious that where the opportunity of interactions and time spent with male colleagues is more the proportion of self-arragnged marriage is more frequent,

Table 3.14 : Occurrence of self-arranged and negotiated marriage

Mode of marriage	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Self-arrnaged	93	36.5	27	29.7	44	42.3	22	36.7
Negotiated	162	63.5	64	70.3	60	57.7	38	63.3
Total	225	100.0	91	100.0	104	100.0	60	100.0

In a recent study made by Khanna and Varghese (1978), it has been shown that the working women of India today have soleminsed 74 per cent marriages through negotiation. Compared to this study and also the present one, Kapur's (1970) study gives a low estimate, 46 per cent, of negotiated marriage among the working women.

We may now attempt evaluating the nature of marriage performance of our subjects, that is, to say, we need to know how marriages were actually performed. We are aware that among the Bengalee Hindus the traditional norm of marriage is sacramental in nature. But there is still another kind, now gaining ground for many practical reasons, which prefers to take recourse to legalise the marriage by obtaining legal sanction. This is the Hindu Marriage Act by which the marriage is solemnised through registration. Examination of data shows that about 75 per cent of working women actually got married following the traditional norm of the society, while the rest solemnised their marriage by obtaining legal sanction through registration (Table 3.15).

Table 3.15 : Way of marriage

Way	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Sacramental	192	75.3	75	82.4	76	73.1	41	68.3
Registration under Hindu Marriage Act	63	24.7	16	17.6	28	26.9	19	31.7
Total	255	100.0	91	100.0	104	100.0	60	100.0

Of the marriages performed under the Hindu Marriage Act, it will be of some interest to know how many of them were arranged and settled by the family of the concerned persons. Because it is somewhat the general concensus that marriages of this kind are performed by self-arrangement. The evidence that is there goes to show that at least in about 16 per cent cases the family elders helped settling marriages of this kind. Table 3.16 would be of much help in appreciating the situation.

Table 3.16 : Marriage under Hindu Marriage Act

Initiative	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Self initiative	53	84.1	15	93.7	24	85.7	14	73.7
Family initiative	10	15.9	1	6.2	4	14.3	5	26.3
Total	63	100.0	16	99.9	28	100.0	19	100.0

This is perhaps the general picture that can be portrayed about the working women concerning marriage. It would now be quite contextual to evaluate the thoughts of unmarried women who have at least expressed their willingness to marry. There are in all 114 unmarried working women in our sample who are willing to marry (cf. Table 3.7). Of these women a large majority around 74 per cent have expressed their desire to marry according to sacramental Hindu marriage procedure. The situation can be best judged by appreciating Table 3.17. Only some 14 per cent are interested in the Hindu Marriage Act.

Table 3.17 : Preference for nature of marriage

Way	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Sacramental Hindu marriage	84	73.7	20	66.7	40	81.6	24	68.6
Hindu Marriage Act	17	14.9	4	13.3	6	12.2	7	20.0
No preference	13	11.4	6	20.0	3	6.1	4	11.4
Total	114	100.0	30	100.0	49	99.9	35	100.0

If we attempt to understand the situation of the three occupational categories independently we find that the office workers are more bent upon sacramental marriage. Contrary to this, the women in technical jobs prefer the Hindu Marriage Act. No pleading is perhaps necessary for their justifying marriages through the traditional norm. It may suffice to say that the traditional norm carries with it aesthetic values and religious sentiments. On the other hand, the informants interested in Hindu Marriage Act believe that it has many advantages. Some of them are : overage of the bride, minimisation of expense, less ceremonies. But to crown all it has the advantage of legal validity.

The informants who expressed their feelings about the marriage form were also asked about their feeling regarding the choice of marriage partner.

It was revealed that 6 per cent women had already had their own chosen marriage partners. Again about 14 per cent were strongly inclined to choose their own husband and did not like to be guided by others decision. The remaining 80 per cent were prepared to accept the decision taken by the elderly members of the family.

When, however, enquired about the guide-lines that would help them or actually helped them to select partners, 20 per cent women of the sample provided us with some interesting points. These points, as given below, give an insider view of the charming motivation of a section of the working women.

1. Mutual understanding, compatability, similarity of interests,
2. Highly qualified, well established, good looking and with good manners,
3. Somebody intellectual and in the same wave length with me,
4. The person must be a mature and sympathetic individual. His education and intellectual level should be at for with me,
5. On the basis of emotion,
6. Not for his educational qualification or beauty or bank balance but for his personality and aptness with the surrounding nature,
7. Truly educated man with liberal mind, sportsman like attitude, keen interest in classical music. Man of work on the whole,
8. Educated, industrious and possessing sound health,
9. Educated and established person, and lastly,
10. On the basis of total personality and mental and intellectual faculty.

In 80 per cent cases of unmarried women of our sample the following is the nature of initiative taken by their family members in regard to their marriage.

(*i*) Their family members have either settled or on the verge of settlement (4.8%),

(*ii*) Their family members are trying or anxious to find a suitable match (83.3%),

(*iii*) Their family members are indifferent (8.3%), and

(*iv*) Their family members do not like their daughter get married, lest they would loose the economic support (3.6%).

Faith in the traditional form of marriage is reflected in the near absence of divorce among the married women. It is expected that economic emancipation of women would lead to increase in divorce rate. But in our material we could find only a solitary example of divorce in 255 married cases. This gives a computate oral value close to 0.4 per cent which is comparable to the National Sample Survey (1963) rate of 0.3 per cent among the rural population of India.

The low rate of divorce among the middle class working women is suggestive of two main phenomena. One is that the middle class working women of Calcutta, in so far as marriage is concerned, have not yet given up faith in the traditional value system. And, secondly, even if there was any conjugal conflict due to a rift or serious difference of opinion, the matter must have been amicably settled. Both husband and wife, perhaps, felt that staying together would be more beneficial and socially commendable than seeking a separation. On the whole, it appears that working outside home need not necessarily provide a motive for the dissolution of marriage.

Sharing of Duties

In our society, birth of a boy is preferred and is given more importance over that of a girl. Despite some resemblances the way in which he is brought up differs much than that of a girl. His concern is with outdoor activities while indoor activities are exclusively limited to the other sex. He is neither asked nor expected to do any domestic work which is considered typically feminine. And if he does it on his own, he is subject to criticism for his 'feminine' habit. From his early days he is made to feel that he, by virtue of his sex alone, is superior to her. This is the general norm that is associated with the socialization of a boy. Now, when he grows up and acquires a family of his own, he has very well the image of a family with its division of functions between a providing and protective father and a home-making, submissive mother.

But, with the changing time, women has entered into a new arena of working outside, which was mainly the preserve of men. Consequently, women have added something more to their normal duty of home-making. This, however, could not affect in any way the task of menfolk. There are some women (39.6%) who consider that since bread winning is no longer a monopoly of men, so home-making should no longer be the monopoly of women. They consider home as a joint responsibility of both men and women. Most women (60.4%), however, do not subscribe to this view but still consider that women are for the hearth only despite their involvement in other spheres. The version of 244 married women reflects the views of men in consonance with former's conception. What emerges from the fact gathered thus is very interesting and differs significantly from women's opinion. Men to the tune of 95.1 per cent believe that housekeeping is exclusively a woman's job. Table 3.18 elaborates the case in point.

The divergence of opinion, apparent from the above table, is quite normal. Since both men and women are still tradition oriented the departure cannot be too high, all on a sudden. Again, since women are the interested party, and at the same time the worst sufferer, their response against the prescribed norm even if it is recessive shows a marked change in the attitude

of women in sharing the day to day duties of the family between husband and wife.

Table 3.18 : The view on housekeeping

Is housekeeping exclusively women's duty?	Women's view		Men's view*	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Affirmative	256	60.4	232	95.1
Negative	168	39.6	12	4.9

*As revealed from the version of their wives (the number of married working women being 244, cf. Table 2.9)

One admits it or not, there is no denying the fact that working women, especially married ones, are indeed overworked, overloaded with burden of dual responsibilities. So it is quite natural for them to seek help from others, especially from husbands, in the smooth running of home. And, as a matter of fact, they expect it at least from husbands that domestic chroes should also be shared by husbands. It is our concern to examine that how much they are assisted by their husbands in the domestic chores. Examination of the responses gives us a situation as illustrated in Table 3.19. The husband do help in running the domestic chores in about 68 per cent cases on the whole, either regularly or whenever required, in varying degrees. A reference may be made to the study of Khanna and Varghese (1978) in this context. The study shows that the husbands 'never' help their wives in about 36 per cent cases. But they do help their wives 'sometimes' in about 47 per cent and 'often' in 17 per cent cases.

Table 3.19 : Sharing of work at home by husband

	All		Teacher		Office worker		Technical personnel	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Not at all	79	32.4	28	32.5	33	32.0	18	32.7
Regularly	103	42.2	17	19.8	54	52.4	32	58.2
If required	62	25.4	41	47.7	16	15.5	5	9.1

But while considering the sharing of work at home by the husbands one thing must be made clear. The work which is being shared by the husbands differs in nature than that shared by the wives.

The husbands usually take care of such chores, which allow the wives to devote time in cooking and serving meals to the family members. Some of these jobs are: daily marketing, looking after the children, ironing of clothes, taking the children to school, helping the children to prepare lessons, etc. In the wives' share cooking, cleaning the utensils and home and general up keep of the family remains.

Discussion

We have thus been able to gather some cogent facts, analyse them, and discuss about various parameters that make up and portray a holistic situation of home front of the middle class working women. Taking up the thread from the compositional aspect of the family, it may quite well be said that the working women come from both the joint or extended family and the nuclear family set ups.

Increase in the nuclearity in family, however, has already been noted more as an urban characteristic. And since our survey is city based, there is no wonder that there would be a marked preponderance of nuclear family (56.8%). Of the joint family, the vertical extension type is by far more in existence (30.9%) compared to the horizontal extended type. What, of course, is important and needs taking due note of is the feature of temporary adhesion of extra-family members within a nuclear family set up. The inclusion of an extra-family member in a nuclear family has become necessary to overcome and tackle some of the immediate difficulties of an working woman. The difficulties, as transpired, are mainly centred round the problem of child care. And, at least, 50 per cent of working women of our sample are therefore seen to bent upon mentally favouring the joint family.

In a sample predominated by the nuclear family, it is but natural not to expect too large a family size. And as a matter of fact the average family size gives a figure of 5.07, which falls in the 'medium' class of family size. We have seen that 67 per cent of families have members ranging from 2 to 5 *i.e.*, 'small' to 'medium' class of family size. One reason for this size might be family planning, since we have evidence to show that an overwhelming majority of working women are motivated for family planning.

When the structure and composition of family is considered, it is hard to deny the changing reality. Although, admittedly, we don't have our own material to show what was the earlier situation of family composition of the working women, adequate conviction is there that urban middle class was generally and usually not predominated by the nuclear family set up. Taking a cue from this, and also contrasting it with the situation that has been reflected from our data, it may be inferred upon that perhaps, there is a positive, directional change of family situation from traditional joint family

to the nuclear family. In this connection, another significant change in the family make up cannot escape our notice. It is the inclusion of an extra-family member, sometimes affinally related, in the set up of one's own family for sorting out working women's problems and difficulties.

Taking up out of home employment does not necessarily affect interpersonal relationship. Had it affected positively, women would not have come out increasingly for employment. But the evidence at our disposal vouches that women have been in employment over the last three generations. And in about 34 per cent families there is precedence that women have gone for employment outside. Women generally go for employment on their own accord and initiative, and for that matter they are not being objected to but rather encouraged.

The very acceptance of women's employment does not seriously disturb normal interpersonal relationship within the family. Behind such approval acts more the economic necessity, however. For varied reasons most husband, to the order of 85 per cent in the present study, accept their wives being in employment. Other studies dealing with the aspect also have indicated that today husbands, relatives and even members of the older generation approve or do not mind their educated wives, daughters, daughters-in-law working outside (*cf.* Kapur 1960, 1970; Kapadia 1959; Desai 1957; Hate 1948; 1969; Ross 1961; Cormack 1961; Sengupta 1960; Ranade and Ramchandran 1970; Arora *et al.* 1963; Ramanamma 1969; Jauhari 1970; Ramanujan 1972; Goldstein 1972). Leaving apart others acceptance, the estimate of hushand's approval of wife's employment is, however, at variance. For example, it is 86 per cent in Kapur's (1970) study 50 in Goldstein's (1972) and a little over 76 in Jauhari's study.

This is the picture about husbands approving jobs of their wives. But in the case of unmarried ladies, parents also permit their daughters taking up jobs. The studies of Arora *et al.* (1963) and Goldstein (1972) show the approval of parents to the order of 64 and 40 per cent respectively.

The pilot surveys carried out by Ranade and Ramachandran (1970) in the city of Delhi and Bombay also reveal some interesting features. The Delhi study brings out the fact that nearly 88 per cent of women's relatives were in favour of women's being in employment. And the Bombay study gives us to understand that 'siblings and spouses' to the tune of 94 per cent and parents and parents-in-law in the order of 90 per cent favoured women's employment. It is also held that the prestige of a family is enhanced if there is a working woman in the family. All these go to show very clearly that educated working women are not only accepted by the families from which they come but are respected and admired, too, by a wider section of people both representing within and outside home. The very situation, in turn,

provides us with adequate ground for realisation that, although taking up out of home employment is a recent innovation, it has come to last.

The study has meaningfully brought out the nature and extent of role that are being played by the middle class working women in the context of economic activities of the family. It may be noted that they had always been playing a passive role in non-productive economy of the family. It is only recently that they have switched over to play a more active role.

It we consider one extreme of the fact, it comes to light that in about 14 per cent cases the working women shoulder the entire economic burden of the family. The family depends entirely on the income of working women. And in the other extreme, there are some earning women (19%) who have apparently no role to play either for supplementing or for strengthening the family economy. Between these two extremes, there is a sandwitched mass which potentially helps strengthening and toning up the family economy. Again, there are some married women who quite regularly come forward to rescue or rejuvenate the economy of their parental families. This is in contrast to the general convention and indicates a mild up-grading of status of working women in and, otherwise, predominantly male dominated society. All these evidences very clearly show how a good percentage of working women do play a vital role in building up the family economy.

This opportunity, in turn, has provided them with a firm footing to take a clear stand of their own as far as the family matters are concerned. There is no wonder therefore that their opinions and decisions are now-a-days given adequate weight. Their importance in the family has consequently been much enhanced. The money they earn is generally spent according to their own will. They are the sole controller of the self-earned money in about 50 per cent cases. Besides, they, too, control the family purse jointly with their husbands. It can therefore be said that the women have positively acquired a distinct role—a role not only of supplementing the family income but also a role of controller of family fund.

It may be recapitulated here that the sample comprise women of both married and unmarried status. The ratio is 40 : 60. Those who are already married, for them we need not bother at the moment. But those who are yet to marry, a majority of them are indeed eager to be married and to have a family for their own. The passion is however quite modest and keeping with the natural phenomenon of life. What is of interest here is the fact that the age of marriage of this section of working women, has gone up substantially. It has increased to an average age of 25 years from 22; the latter is the estimated average age of marriage of those women who entered service life after marriage. It becomes thus quite evident that the age at marriage of women has increased due to taking up employment,

There are two diametrically opposite groups of women that we have encountered. One group is the torch bearer of tradition and ethics, in a sense orthodox. The women comprising this group consider marriage as a religious sacrament which must be performed and regulated through the process of rigid rules of caste endogamy. They by virtue of their own thoughts and beliefs help maintain a continuity of tradition. The other group comprises the propagators of change. The women constituting the later group held that marriage is just the union of two partners who are agreeable to accept each other on the basis of equality. The factors of caste, creed, or religion have nothing to do with marriage. Although we have thus two sections of working women, believer of traditions cleanly outweighs the non-believers, the proportion being 2 : 1.

What we have just noted can be considered theoretical in orientation. In reality, however, we have seen that 18 per cent women have been married breaking the traditional mores. In these cases however the marriages have been mostly self-arranged. The significant point that merits mention here is that a small percentage of such unions have been arranged through negotiation by parents or family elders. This, although small, is a pointer that adequately bespeaks of a social change. Also a change from tradition to nontradition can be deciphered if we analyse the mode of marriage, *i.e.*, whether marriages have been performed adopting the traditional sacramental procedure or simply under Hindu Marriage Act. The data shows that one-fourth of the marriages have been performed by taking recourse to the Hindu Marriage Act.

When the opinion of unmarried women was sought for with regard to selection of their mates, at least 20 per cent of them said that they would by their own select their mates without caring for the decision of their parents. This state of mind of the unmarried women points again towards a change from the tradition. The incidence of divorce is low. The solitary example in the present study, which is worked out as 0.4 per cent, is quite in keeping with the national rate of divorce for rural India (0.3%).

The question of sharing duties by partners arises only after acquiring a family through marriage. In Indian society the general convention is that housekeeping is exclusively a feminine affair. Although there may be deviations, there are many a followers of the age-old tradition, consisting of members of both the sexes. In the present study at least 60 per cent women and 95 per cent men stand by to this tradition. A study on the middle class working women of Patna, a city in Bihar, conducted by Kalarani (1974) shows that husbands of 131 respondents believe it was the wife's duty to carry out household jobs and to look after children while 66 persons were of the opinion that, since both were working, it was the duty of husbands to share some household responsibilities.

In fact we have come across a section of women which is more conscious about women's rights, claims and duties. And we have also seen that the educated working wives, by and large, do expect and also want their husbands to be active in sharing the household responsibilities. It is because of their feeling that since the working women, being wife and mother, are engaged as earners over and above their own role of home-maker, they are now quite vocal in demanding positive help from their husbands in sharing the domestic responsibilities. It has been pointed out by Ross (1961), however, that men still continue to feel they will be degraded if they help their wives in household jobs. It evinces that working women in the present sample are indeed benefited by the active help of their husbands in maintaining domestic chores, either regularly (42.2%) or occasionally (25.4%). This shows that working woman has begun demanding the husbands for a greater help in carrying out her responsibilities at home.

CHAPTER FOUR

Women at Two Situations

The Indian polity recognises equality of rights for men and women. But the Indian society is implicitly following a sharp distinction between the sex. For example, the adjectives that describe the idealized, simplified stereotypes of normal masculinity and femininity are quite distinct and different, if not opposite. Boys are considered to be made up of a co-ordination of independence, aggression, competitiveness, leadership, task orientation, outward orientation, assertiveness, innovation, self-discipline, stoicism, activity, analytic mindedness, objectivity, courage, unsentimentality, rationality, confidence, and emotional control. But what about the girls? What are big girls made of? An amalgam of dependence, passivity, fragility, low pain tolerance, non-aggression, non-competitiveness, inner orientation, inter-personal orientation, empathy, sensitivity, nurturance, subjectivity, intutitiveness, yieldingness, receptivity, inability to risk, emotional liability and supportiveness is the answer. Modesty, chastity, sobriety are the virtues of a woman.

Obviously, the way in which the girls are brought up, even today, is clearly distinct from that of the boys. True, they get apparently an equal opportunity in the sphere of education with the boys. But that is not all. And, nonetheless, girls learn during their early life that society expects from a woman greater flexibility of mind, capacity to adjust and submissiveness. With regard to ideologies and values, the girls are made to feel that it is of no use for them to adhere strictly to any particular ideology. Because ideology might differ well after being married. This emphasis on feminine role has a direct and tremendous effect on the development of personality and identity formation of a girl.

Such is the background of their own role perception which is deeply rooted in tradition and in the socialization process as well. The expectations of other members of the family are naturally influenced by the same traditional world view.

Thus in cultural understanding, women are primarily associated with the home. They are expected to look after domestic chores, the typical role

being that of a housewife-mother. Home-making, like child bearing and child rearing, is deeply associated with femininity. In short, home-making is their *fate accomplii*, and anatomy is their destiny.

Taking up gainful employment by the middle class working women in itself is a change in our social situation. An since it is just a more recent phenomenon, until now it could only change a little the persistence and influence of traditional norms with regard to women's domestic roles. Whether they work in the field, factory or mine, at construction site, or in white collar job, they are expected to be home-maker as equally as that of the women who confine themselves exclusively within the home. Everyday domestic chores along with the new work role outside institute a workload. They are thus subject to a dual demand of home and work. Indeed, it is rather conflicting. But the women of today have envisaged it and willingly accepted the two roles. They are seen to be up and coming for making a harmonious synthesis of the two diversities. How successfully they have been able to do that is a matter worth probing into.

In trying to seek answer to the abiding problem we may initiate taking a concern of the working women with reference to their civil condition. The proportion of unmarried to married women in our data as already noted, is more or less 40:60. The general assumption, which appears tenable, is that the unmarried women face less problems in managing the home than married women. Usually, in the case of an earning daughter, her mother, or any elderly person, is sympathetic and does not expect much from her in household work. A few cases of deviation are, however, there and these may be considered as exceptions.

The following case-history might illustrate the point more explicitly.

Miss T. (28) is an unmarried working girl. She lost her mother at an early age. Her brothers are not married. There is no other female member in the family. So she has to shoulder all the feminine responsibilities at home. She said : "I lost my mother at an early age. My elder sisters got married. But my brothers are yet to marry. I am the only female member in the family. So I have to do everything what my mother would do if she was alive. My unmarried state does not render me with any privilege what other unmarried working women are enjoying."

Real problem emerges when they get married and more so when they become mother, especially in nuclear family. An examination of their daily routine shows how carefully and tactfully they tackle the problem. Let us take, for example, the case of one Mrs. C. who is 36 years old and has one daughter. She is working as an office assistant in one of the biggest Central Government organisations in Calcutta for the last 14 years. She said, "In weekdays, I get up from bed at 5 o'clock in the morning and arrange to

make fire the two ovens. After cleaning face and changing the clothes I start cooking meal. Within 7.30 in the morning. I complete cooking. At 5.30 a.m. I arouse my daughter. She is now 8 years old. She takes milk and biscuit from me. After having her breakfast she sits beside me in the kitchen with her books for reading. After sometime I arrange my bed and clean the room. My husband, daughter and myself taken our bath and get ready for office and school. We three take our meals at the same time. Then I arrange the tiffin for all of us. I start for office at about 8.45 a.m. and reach office at about 10 a.m. After the whole day's office work I leave office at 5 p.m. and reach home by 6.30 p.m. I take tea and snacks and then I start cooking. It takes about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours time. After that I take some rest and look after my daughter who in the meantime starts reading. During this time I generally read newspaper. At 9.15 p.m. we take our meal. Then I play the radio and listen to it for sometime. At 10.30 p.m. I go to bed.

I have one whole-timer maidservant who helps me in managing the home. My husband does all his work by himself daily including marketing. In holidays, generally the dometstic chores begin a little late at 7 a.m. I do usual cooking and cleaning of the room. Special washings are also done in the morning. At noon generally I do sewing or knitting. In the evening we sometimes go out to cinema or make social visits".

The case histories just illustrated amply demonstrate that time is the taskmaster ; the matter is equally applicable to others as well. They get up early in the morning and go back to bed late at night, perhaps as the last person. In solving the duties of a housewife they take help of a hired person, may be a whole-timer or a part-timer or both as necessity demands. The part-time helper generally does the work of sweeping, swabbing, washing clothes, cleaning vessels, fetching water, and sometimes fetching rations. Whereas from a whole-timer they get help in cooking, looking after children and the like. Besides, they also take help of modern gadgets, like heater, pressure cooker, gas, refrigerator as far as possible, to minimise physical labour and to run with the time. In the domestic chores, they generally, do not get or get little help from their husbands. In joint family, the nature of duty is somewhat at variance. They do all these because they share the belief along with at least 50 per cent of working women it is exclusively their duty to look after the household affairs. Home-making does not necessarily mean only routine work like cooking, serving, cleaning, etc. It is something more. They are expected to give a greater care and attention to the children and their studies, to keep home better and attractive; to provide more varied menus, play hostess to guests and friends of the family. As ideal housewife they have to understand the mind and individual need of each and every member of the family. They hear all of them patiently, sincerely and efficiently, compartmentalises all their needs and

through the twenty four hours day gives them what they want. They attend their husbands, in-laws, other relatives in the family and all the more their children.

The plight of working mother is naturally intensified by children's problems. As mother, they realise it is their duty to pay full attention to the physical and mental development of their children. They suffer from a sense of guilt if they are unable to do so. Once more, contexually, we may repeat that joint family is a boon to working mother in this regard. A blood relation is naturally more sincere about the child. And the mother is at rest to that extent. In extreme cases there are examples, a working mother, in a nuclear family, makes an arrangement of sending children to her parental family for their welfare. This may be a daily affair or where it is weekly, on holidays the children are brought back home and again sent before the working day. A salient feature requires mention here is that a working woman in nuclear family has much dependence or inclination towards her parental family. The underlying reason is that perhaps she knows her place of origin better than her husband's family. The situation may be illustrated by referring to the case of one Mrs. G., aged 32, having two minor children. She is employed in a State Government office.

> "After the expiry of my father-in-law and mother-in-law I started facing problems regarding my children. As a solution, I shifted from the previous locality to another place nearby my parental house. Now my mother looks after my children in my absence."

Let us come back to our main points. The children are looked after and taken care of appropriately by the relatives in a joint family during regular periodic absence of mother from the family. In a nuclear family the children are to remain under the care of hired persons, until any other suitable arrangements are made. It is for this specific cause that the demand for creches is now gaining ground. And the few creches that are already there in the city of Calcutta are much less than the actual requirement. The mother can only put her energy and attention in the caring of her children beyond the working hours. A qualitative replacement is definitely there, which is apt to compensate the intermittent separation, instead of a quantitative one (quantity in terms of time). Mothers are, in general, satisfied with the hours they can spend with the children. But a few mothers tend to pamper their children in order to make up for what they consider lack of proper and adequate attention on their part. There is a case in point here. Even if a mother is at home all the time, *i.e.*, non-working in our sense, she does not spend all her time for taking care of child. It is indeed not required either. In a study Bowlby (1951) points out that the situation of the children, totally deprived of maternal care, is entirely different from those with intermittent

separation. Again, Simonsen (1947) observes the average Development Quotient of the family children, aged between one and four, to be normal, 102, even when the mothers of these children were working and the homes being often very unsatisfactory.

In addition to all these, as some of my respondents reported, they have to do certain other extra-domestic work, such as daily marketing. This also takes away much of their time and energy. This is but an added pressure.

After returning home from place of work men and women do not spend time in the same way. The general notion is that men have put their sweat and blood in earning money and therefore they are supposed to take rest. In fact, they are free after office hours. They may take rest or have some sort of recreation, or do some work which may help building or promoting their own career. But home-maker working women are simply deprived of such legitimate facilities. They get but little chance of sitting idle. It is not always that they do all the things single-handed, but their personal attention and careful supervision matter much in running the home smoothly. The corollary is that eventually they become physically overworked and get fatigue in normal situation, not to speak of exigency.

A few respondents have clearly deplored their difficulties of physical strains in managing both the fronts. They feel that they are unable of playing the proper role of housewife and whatever they do towards it is not upto the level of their satisfaction. The conciousness is there because they are well conversant about the role of an ideal home-maker. Those who are engaged in teaching are rather at a vantage point in this regard over their counterparts who are in other professions.

The assignment of holidays is a bit different, however. Truly speaking, it is hardly a day of rest. For most of them it is the day for clearing backlogs. Majority spend their time in doing the domestic work which they have not been able to do during working days. Moreover, during holidays they take the opportunity of meeting the social calls and engagements and also sometimes go out to cinemas and cultural shows for recreation and rejuvination. Normally, their social life has been constricted owing to lack of time on weekdays.

At the working place they assume altogether a different personality. Here they are duty bound and do things more in business-like manner. They are to be punctual and sincere. They have to perform their work efficiently and unmistakably. Of course, the degree of responsibility and quality of work capacity depend upon one's position in the working set up. Nonetheless, starting from the lowest one to the top, each one has her own responsibility within the ongoing machinery. In majority cases of office goers, the duty hours are fixed. And they adhere to that. They usually spend no

time or little time in extra-official activities. But in some cases, the work load being more demands devotion of more time beyond the scheduled working hours. This happens with working women holding executive position, or with some devoted teachers of teaching institutions. Moreover, in teaching institutions, true that one gets more time and opportunity to look after home, there are specific duties that are generally performed at home. For example the answer papers are more often examined at home. The home-maker working woman has to meet the demand of both fronts and oblige these.

Thus, it could be seen that fulfilment of the two goals requires qualities of different types. While the attainment of goal at the home front requires selfnegation, and cooperation, self-enhancement and competition are the factors that counts much for the working front. Bowman (1954) has rightly pointed out the dilemma that a modern women is facing. It is quite tempting here to paraphrase him. 'Perhaps no one feels the combined pressures of tradition, biological nature, new marital and social expectation and occupational opportunity more accurately than the young wife-home-maker-mother with a career of her own. In a sense she is expected to be a variety of persons and to live many "Lives".

Whatever may be the work load at working place or at home, whatever be her marital status, or age, each and everyone has clearly expressed that it is neither the household duties or duties at office nor a combination of both that cause so much of tension and fatigue as caused by transport problem alone. Indeed it is a mammoth problem, and the solution of it is beyond their means. Words are inadequate to give the right expression of the difficulties that one faces due to transport difficulty while coming to office and again going back to home. Only a handful of lucky teachers are free from such regular sufferings as they live nearby their institution. The only relief, although too meagre to satisfy the situation for the working class is that some transports have recently been introduced for carrying lady passengers alone during the peak hours of the day. The cry is that there should be some quick transport with minimum necessary comfort so that the energy and time they are wasting could easily be profitably utilised for a better performance of work at both the spheres.

In spite of all these difficulties, today's strong determined and free thinking woman is surmounting, or trying to surmount, all her problems. In doing so, some have confessed, in the beginning there was hardship but it is not so acute now. And now women in the order of 70.5 per cent claim that they have been able to manage two roles satisfactorily. The finding stands in conformity with that of Hate (1969) the figure being 70.6 per cent.

We must not forget in this context that home-making is an art too. A woman bestowed with natural endowment of ability, aptitude and taste can make the home an abode of peace. It is a quality. And there is no reason to believe that working women are deprived of such qualities and only the women at home are endowed with them. Any one can possess it. And it is she, who possess it, can herself be satisfied and make others satisfy in her way of home-making, be she a woman shuttling between the two poles of working world or fixed to a single situation. It is only then home-making can be raised to the level of art. Otherwise, it becomes drudgery.

Now, if we intend to see with an open mind, in an unbiased way, we may readily realise that for middle class women there has been considerable role expansion. It is because, they are called upon to assume many new roles in addition to her traditional ones. The efficiency that is required of them in full time employment with its consequent professional responsibilities, as well as in running a modern home with its extra familial dimensions, generates considerable physical, psychological and emotional stress.

Contextually, we may take a note of two important points. The first one is that domestic work is expandable to an almost unlimited degree. And the second one relates to an interesting investigation, from our point of view, of the working hours of housewives. The said investigation was carried out by the "Institute national d' studes demographiques" of France in 1947 (Stoetzel 1948). Besides other points, it compared the hours spent in housework by fulltime housewives with those of married women who went to work. It was found that the more than 80 hours week (both home and outside job) of the married women in employment exceeded the working week of a fulltime housewife with children by only 6 to 8 hours per week, *i.e.*, by roughly one hour per day. It may be said that in terms of productivity this daily extra hour achieves results which are out of proportion to the exertion it involves.

At any rate, to overcome such stresses as mentioned earlier, they need help and understanding, both at the level of family and society as well. But what is the attitude of society towards the working women? Do they get proper recognition?

A deeper analysis of our material shows that the attitude of the society towards working women is very unkind and ambiguous, at times. Society's ambivalence regarding the gainful employment and independence of woman is demonstrated in many ways. Their income is appreciated because it profitably helps raising the standard of living, lessening the financial burdens. But the freedom of association and movement needed for outdoor work is not approved. Men may come late in evening from office or may take time off from family in the interest of their career, that does not matter. It is

believed as their birth right. But women should abstain from such undue facilities. Home is still considered as their primary sphere of work. It is only in exigency that men restrain from official duties but this is not the case with women. It is amazing that the same person, while at home does not like his working wife to be out of home at some emergent situation in spite of her preoccupation at office criticises his lady colleague for her absenteeism. The working women usually socialises with ease. Their free and open attitude is often misunderstood. Their status is, as always, derived from husband as a kind of reflected glory, not from the quality of their own personality and work.

This problem is very much there and will remain unless the distinction between men's work and women's work, within and outside families, is removed through socialisation process. If household work and the rearing of children are recognised as socially and economically productive, then sharing such responsibilities need not necessarily disgrace a man. And men need not become check points to a woman's right to play the multiple roles required by the modern society. Recognition of housewife's work, for the purpose of national accounting as a contribution to national savings and stability of the economy, would enhance women's status and acknowledge society's debt to them rather than its present attitude, where they have to shoulder the drudgery and the sacrifice without any recognition.

Todays woman is exposed to changing beliefs, values and attitudes. They are becoming more independent than being men's appendage. They feel that their employment or career in itself has its rewards and satisfaction. They need the cooperation and understanding from the family. These only can ensure them some rest and leisure for self-improvement or even enable them to adjust the patterns of social interactions demanded by outside home job and as well by home. The main pivot, which can support the (married) working woman, is their husband. It is not only wife's satisfaction with her job but a corresponding satisfaction of the husband also with her job along with concomitant satisfaction with her wife's and mother's role, contribute towards happiness. But what is the attitude of husbands towards their working wives? Do they take it as a normal way of life? Do they appreciate it ? It would have been better, needless to mention, if the attitude of husband could be studied directly on this important aspect. But here the study is one sided. Because we had to depend solely on wife's version and reading. According to their feeling, majority of husbands (85%) do want or at least approve their wive's being in job (*cf.* Table 3.3). Among other things, money is an important factor that counts very much in this issue. They also like their wives being in job for reasons : (*i*) taking pride for having a working wife, (*ii*) believe in women's liberty and economic independence and (*iii*) taking due cognisance of wife's desire.

But this is one side of rosy picture. There is yet another side which is equally important too. Here we meet a section of husbands who dislikes and sometimes opposes to wive's employment. The husbands feel as women say, that it deflates their ego and provides them with a situation of an inferiority complex. They still believe home to be women's primary concern and to manage the home is exclusively their duty. It is taken to be a disgrace on the part of a husband to help his wife in domestic chores.

The data at our disposal reveal that working women to the tune of 40 per cent consider house-keeping as not their exclusive duty. The corresponding figure from men's side is only 5 per cent. It is interesting enough to note that there is a solitary case where the wife's feeling, that it is exclusively her duty to run the house smoothly, is opposed by her husband. Analysis shows that in about 42 per cent cases the wives do get help from their husband's regularly (*cf.* Table 3.19). All these bespeaks of the emergence of a fairly fixed, albeit flexible, and fluctuating internal division of labour. Of course, the husband is regarded as the wife's assistant or temporary stand-in-aid but not as a co-worker on equal terms.

Lastly, but not the least, one must feel that by taking up a job, women do not cease to be women. They continue to have the same need for love and consideration, for emotional dependence and companionship as the obviously helpless and frail glamorous ladies of leisure. Husband and wife's being 'modern', helps bridging the poles at issue and achieving marital harmony. But by 'modern' here it is not meant 'Western', as it is usually understood or taken for granted. By being 'modern' is meant being rational, flexible, open-minded—open to suggestions and change, tolerant, understanding and cooperative. A complete partnership, where both work outside and yet complement each other at home, can be a thing of ideal beauty. As their life together is strengthened. their children grow up properly, un-pampered, independent and, above all, with a feeling of pride for their parents.

CHAPTER FIVE

Status of Women

In the preceding chapters, different aspects and activities of women's life have been examined and analysed. In the present chapter an attempt has been made to assess the status of women in order to understand the general attitude of society towards the fair sex. The status of women in a given patriarchal society is a positive indicator to assess and estimate the degree of social change. It can profitably be used as a yardstick to compare the impact of modernity in developing countries. And to have an idea of the changing status of the Indian women, who is proverbially feminine, docile, conservative and emotionally passive, is but pertinent to our study.

The term 'status' was first used in anthropology by Ralph Linton (1936). Status is a composite concept. It indicates the position of an individual, or a group, in terms of several values in society. Each status position is expressed in terms of a role. Role denotes a set of expectations and obligations associated with a particular status position within a group. It is thus the sum total of various culturally attributed roles one has to play together with the rights and duties inherent in a social position. Linton (1945) clearly points out that status is a collection of rights and duties and as such it is clearly distinct from the person who occupy it. Max Weber used the term status to define the behavioural parameters of class; such as the possession of economic means, external standard of living, cultural and recreational possibilities (Gerth and Mills 1970). In a changing situation of modernity status changes from ascription to achievement (Parsons 1972).

To put it in other way round, status if seen as a derivative is the result of a pattern of relationships between two sets of human beings. The pattern is composed of images they have of themselves and of each other. If we just enlarge the canvas we find that status denotes relative position of persons, groups, social strata, and a range of identified social categories as men and women acquire their identities through all these units and institutions. The notion of status involves comparison and grading. For example, status for one set of women may be in relation to what other women have, now or in

the past, to what men have and, thirdly, what attributes they think men would respect. In this context, it must be remembered that one has to occupy very many status positions at a given point of time and to play a number of roles as those in the kinship system, family system and in a wider network of social system. His or her status is usually not determined by any one particular status position held by him or her, but by the composite status which results from merging of these various positions.

From the foregoing discussion, it is perhaps amply clear that to define status is not at all an easy task indeed. We can at best try to understand it but not to define it. It is also true that to present an uniform picture of the status of women is not possible. It is because of the fact that we still have, in every part of the country, a variety of social groups—tribal, peasant, and urban—functioning in diverse ecologies and in different cultural milieu. Moreover, in this vast and variegated land of ours the domestic, social, political, legal and economic position of women manifest a number of ups and downs, varieties, variations, differences and diversities. And under these circumstances, it becomes too difficult to identify the real position of Indian women in the context of family, society and State, or to envisage the correct attitude of Indians towards their womenfolk.

But one thing is almost certain. It is that the women in India had never enjoyed a position of equality with men. It is true throughout the whole period of history in India. Perhaps in Vedic times, of which we have some imperfect records, the women enjoyed a marginally better position compared to other historical periods. History tells us that they never had any political power nor had they enjoyed the right of inheritance of wealth, ritual power of the priests, etc. Moreover, they were denied of the opportunity of learning Veda. It is only in the home front that their position was a little better. Endowed with the ability of child-rearing, they were entrusted with home management. The maxim of motherhood is the only glorified aspect identified with them, and India has always revered women as mothers. They have very carefully tried to preserve this ideal throughout most period of history from Vedic times till today. Even when they were entrusted with duties at home, they were never counted as a supreme decision-making authority.

The position of women deteriorated considerably during the age of the *Sutras*, *Epics* and early *Smritis* (c. 500 B.C. to c. A.D. 500). In this period, the women lost their rights to justice, freedom, education, and equality. Their position is clearly epitomized in the *Manu Smriti.* It seems useful to quote the English rendering of a verse, after Rama Choudhuri (1977), for portraying the situation.

"The father protects a woman during childhood sweet
The husband during youth bright
The sons during the old age feeble
So a woman deserves not Freedom's right" (*Manu Smriti* 9.3).

This is more or less the general position of women from the Vedic times to the Smritis. This subservient position of women continue throughout the period of Indian history until the 19th century, of course, with varying degrees of intensity.

Continuous and untiring efforts of some social and religious reformers in the 19th century led us to perceive a silver lining against this dark cloud. Pioneers are many. But Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founding father of the Brahmo Samaj, tops all. He fought with the views of orthodox Hindus against the wrongs meted out to women and was responsible for abolishing *Sati* practice. In 1829, a decree was passed by which the said practice was made a legal offence. To name a few others are Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Keshab Chandra Sen, Dayananda Saraswati, Radhakanta Deb, Behramji Malabai, Vishnu Shastri Pandit, Ranade, K. T. Telang, Gopal Hari Deshmukh, and Rabindra Nath Tagore, who had direct role in social uplifting of women and spreading of women's education. Due to their untiring efforts, the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, legislation against child marriage and the Sharda Act of 1929 were passed. Social reforms during the 19th and early 20th century were closely associated with religious movements. The Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Arya Samaj-all fought not merely for social justice for women but also against the inequalities of caste and the ritualistic aspects of Hinduism. The social reformers conceptualised woman's welfare through her traditional role as wife and mother

Swami Vivekananda's name also comes up much in the fore front. He believed that to make India truly modern, Indian women should be emancipated from their social bondage. It is he who pointed out to the world that as bird cannot fly with one wing only, similarly a nation with her women in shackles can make no progress. And, lastly, it was Mahatma Gandhi who could achieve a tremendous success in ushering women out of their home to make the nation free. It may be said that he was the first to plead modern roles for women in India. Gandhiji stressed the need for major changes in their legal and social status and in their participation in issues outside home. One thing must be said unhesitatingly that Indian women of today should be grateful to these reformers and pathfinders for their recovery from the dreadful subjugation that had persisted before the 19th century. From this time onwards, moves towards legislation that would place women on an equal footing with men were more apparent.

And it is only after independence that rights to political power (adult franchise), inheritance of property equally with men and right to hold any public office by the women came into recognition.

Thus, we may infer that the status of women in modern Indian society accrues to a great extent from the cherished objective and ideals that inspired the renaissance in India. The awakening of women was an integral part of it. The preamble to the Constitution of India promises "to secure to all its citizens, Justice—social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation." This radicalism of the Constitution and its deliberate departure from the traditionally inherited social system lay in its implicit assumption that every adult woman, irrespective of her social position or accomplishments, will function as a citizen, as an individual partner in the task of nation building. There is no denying the fact that motherhood is an important function, but the Constitution implies that this can no longer be regarded as the only significant role for women. A gap between traditional social attitudes and institutions and the new roles that women are expected to play in the political, social and economic spheres are likely to create problem and impose constraints on women's ability to perform such roles. The ideals are really praiseworthy.

Apart from the Constitutional safeguards, there are other enactments which seek welfare of the women. The notable acts are:

(*i*) the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955
(*ii*) the Hindu Succession Act of 1956
(*iii*) the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956
(*iv*) the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act of 1956, and
(*v*) the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961.

Despite the Constitutional rights and various legislations, the status of the Indian women, in general, has not been much elevated as per the expectation. The main factor responsible for this state is the social tradition. The social tradition of ours is deeply rooted in the mind of the people. The social environment, it may be admitted, has not much altered; and there is little hope of any alteration in near future. Unless an overhauling of social customs and refreshing of popular feelings to women's position as well are effected, there is very little possibility of a total change in the status of women at national level. Thus concepts of equality, role differentiation; legal social and political rights, dependency or independency would likely to remain pragmatically meaningless for the Indian women. There is therefore, nothing wrong in admitting the hard reality, we believe. As things stand now, it may be realised that, as far as status is concerned, the general Indian women

are on the same step as they were in the past, even after 40 years of independence.

Let us now examine our own material in order to evaluate the status of the middle class working women. The task, no doubt, is a difficult one. Because status is neither an enumerable parameter, nor can it be evaluated by any quantifiable measure. Even then, however, the status of any one may be estimated by studying her achievements, attitude, relationship and mutual behaviour in the context of home front. The understanding of status appears to be aided if we dwell upon a single question; to what extent out of home jobs have improved the status of working women.

At home their status is partly ascribed one since time immemorial in the Indian scene. This position has remained almost unaltered. It may be recalled here that each status position is expressed in terms of role. And role, in turn, denotes a set of expectations and obligations. Here we find that the middle class working women as mother are looking after children, as wife attending to husband, as home-maker performing the household chores. They are being, in turn, looked upon as important members of the family as daughters, wives, and others.

Besides, status can be achieved also. In the present case, the middle class women have achieved some status solely due to earning by means of out of home jobs. Being wage earner they have become an important pinion in the economic machinery of the family. The data supply us with the information that in 14 per cent cases their family entirely depends on their earning, while in about 67 per cent cases they are contributing, at least partly to the family purse. The economic footing, in its wake, has automatically, helped them in earning power and authority. The corollary is that they are exercising the achieved power and authority in the domain of household chores. They are utilizing it for sorting out many problems concerning care and education of children and budget and expenditure of the family. In fact, it is seen that they are controlling money in about 50 per cent cases. And in about 21 per cent cases, they control the purse jointly with the husband.

Their employment has made them more conscious of the rights and previleges and of self-respect. This has brought about changes in their attitude towards their own worth and position in the family, towards interpersonal relationship and also their own roles and duties at home. Their sense of equality demands that the relationship between the couple could be that of co-partnership. This has been reflected through the responses of 74 per cent working women. Or, when both husband and wife are earning, housekeeping cannot be regarded as woman's exclusive concern. This view has been expressed by 60 per cent informants. The husband,

perhaps, has been made to understand the view. Because our analysis has yielded that husbands help in managing the domestic chores, either regularly (42.2%) or whenever asked for (25.4%). But to crown all, is a break through. It is the acceptance of their employment not only by husband alone (85%), but also by other members of the family. Thus, in effect, we find there exists a cordial and harmonious relationship within the family. Giving due consideration to these factors, we may infer that their position at home has been improved and elevated. This elevation, of course, is solely due to their emergence as earner.

Of the occupational categories if we take up the case of teaching profession, it may be realised that it has already earned social sanction which has resulted, in effect, gain an achieved status. It is for this reason that we find at least 64 per cent of women have expressed their preference for this job. It appears further that working in a scientific or in a technical organisation has to some extent, although not comparable to teaching, improved the status of women of the technical personnel category. Thus, it may be abstracted that the status has definitely improved for those women who are in the above two categories than those who are in the office jobs. In general, the status of the working women has been much elevated compared to the non-working general middle class women.

CHAPTER SIX

Recapitulation and Conclusion

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION

This is a study that concerns with the middle class working women of Calcutta. It represents the first anthropological attempt to investigate empirically the changing situation of the urban middle class working women who have quite recently been inducted into the field of out of home jobs. The working hypothesis considered for this study was that gainful employment outside home by the women brings forth a series of change in their family composition, inter-personal relationship, economic role, and concurrently with the change in status.

In order to test the hypothesis a survey was designed and conducted to gather relevant data from the middle class Bengalee working women who were employed in organised sector in the city of Calcutta. The data thus collected were systematically treated with a view to identifying, analysing and bringing into sharper focus the nature and extent of change in the life pattern of middle class working women. Despite working outside home which might have caused some change as assumed, it was further hypothesised that the break with the past would not be sharp but there would remain continuity with respect to certain aspects linking the traditional way of life of the middle class women with the modern working middle class.

It was based on the observation that the cultural values, norms and ethos of the middle class are deeply rooted into tradition.

The primary emphasis is therefore on continuity and change. In discussion on continuity and change the question of adjustment naturally comes upon the surface. And, indeed, how the working women are carrying on with the load of two roles one at home and the other at working place by exploiting the process of adjustment, is a behavioural dimension of abiding interest worth probing into. Thus the element of adaptability calls for due cognisance.

Cultural change is the key tone of the present study. Therefore the definition and meaning of change as used here needs a clarification at the very

outset. A change as it is understood anthropologically itself implies a process. It accounts for a deviation from the prescribed norm. It may occur at the core modifying basic structural organisations. Many thus believe, notably Raymond Firth (1959), that social change mainly concerns with structural change—alterning principles on which a society operates or modifying framework upon which its social relations are constructed. The change may be brought about by various kind of forces which may be political religious, industrial, urban or a combination of some or all of the factors. While approving this, we do not expect any such change altering the core at the structural or organisational level for taking up employment by the middle class women. We have considered changes which have influenced in inducting some alterations in the way of life of women due to working and also adjustments for the purpose of combining two roles of the working women. For example, a change in the size and composition of the family or a contraction in the size and composition of the domestic unit has been considered here as a change in social structure, since these are major determinants for such changes.

The term middle class used here also needs a clarification. Middle class is a social class and not simply an economic one. And, it is known, social classes are defined as aggregate of individuals who occupy broadly similar positions in the scale of social prestige. Thus, middle class is that segment of population which comprises 'white collar' workers and professionals. It differs from the 'working class', which is composed of workers and also from the elite class in terms of wealth and lineage. And why we have selected this category of people for our study needs explanation. It is because of the well recognised fact that this class is exposed to divergent and conflicting values which set the pace and direction of change in a society.

Education and life style are also important determinants of this class.

In any kind of study alike the present one, it is imperative to receive input from two categories of information. In the present case, the first consists of the data relating to the current situation of the middle class working women of Calcutta. And the second comprises the data concerning the traditional way of life of the group. The second category serves as a conceceptual reference framework for interpreting the data of the first category.

In order to collect data relating to the first category field work, as aready noted, among the middle class working women in Calcutta was undertaken during 1974-75. For generating basic information, two most important anthropological methods of collecting data by direct observation and interview were adopted. Data were also generated with the help of structured schedules and forms. A sample of 424 working women could be drawn employing the 'snow-ball' sampling technique. The sample was further broken down into three occupational categories; the teacher, the

office worker, and the technical personnel. The division was done with a view to making a comparison. And for the second category, we had to fall back necessarily on the data already available in various literature for constructing a profile of the traditional way of life of the middle class Bengalee women. The year 1947 has been assumed as the datum line for the reference framework.

At this state, it must be made clear that the study does not, at any rate, intend to cover all the dimensions of middle class women that have undergone the process of change. To evaluate the process of change and continuity, it has only tried to concern with some limited facets of the world of working women. For instance, the aspects of family composition, interpersonal relationship within the family, marriage, divorce, status, world view, and some such other dimensions of the working women have been investigated into.

In any discussion on change, one way of presenting the material could be introduced by specifying, first the reference framework that attempts to portray a working profile of the traditional setting. Accordingly it appears in order to present now an outline of the profile that could be constructed on the basis of the already available published material. This part has been considered in the study as depicting the second category of data about which we have had the occasion of making a reference earlier.

THE TRADITIONAL SETTING

Conventionally, working outside home has generally been taken as one of the major life roles for men alone. The role that has been identified with men, in all societies, and perhaps through age, is that of a provider. And in this context it is the women who have been provided for. The corollary is that women are supposed to be concerned mainly with home affairs. More or less, this was, and is still today, the very social setting prevalent throughout the Indian society, not to speak of West Bengal alone.

In earlier times women had had a separate domain of their own. It was strictly confined within the four walls of the domestic unit, and they were never expected to concern or articulate beyond their own perimetre. Domestic virtues, faithfulness to husband coupled with modesty were believed to be their be all and end all of life. It could be seen also that much of their productive labour was utilised for the maintenance of a 'fifth world' —a world encompassing the duties in kitchen, kitchen garden and the nursery. In sum, the nature of familiar constraints on woman's social role could perhaps be best described through the concept of triple role—a role of 'breeder-feeder-producer.'

In the society, preference was always shown to male children and to

the male members of the family. A boy was considered an economic asset and a girl and economic liability.

Education to women was almost neglected or denied. Normally girls were not allowed to avail themselves of the fruit of education. Thus with almost no education they were given to marriage at quite an early age, perhaps during childhood. The net result was they had no voice in any sphere of social life, not to speak of selecting their own mate.

And what's after marriage? It was almost a blind alley. They were considered meek and submissive members of a large joint family. But they were given a bundle of thankless duties and responsibilities with almost no privilege. Realising this situation, Gandhiji once exclaimed. "Today the sole occupation of a woman amongst us is supposed to be to bear children, to look after her household and otherwise to drudge for the household" (Gandhi 1928).

What was their position as wife? The very foundation of the joint patriarchal family depended on women's sacrifices. They necessarily played a subservient role to men who went out to earn and support the family. They thus accepted a passive role and believed that this secondary position was their true status. Describing the traditional norms prevalent in Indian Society, even after the Independence, Dube (1955) writes, "According to the traditional norms of the society a husband is expected to be authoritarian figure whose will should always dominate the domestic scene. The wife should regard him as her 'master' and should serve him faithfully..... The husband is 'superior', the wife is 'subordinate'."

In fine, it is not hard to discover that women had a subjugated position. The most amazing feature was that they had neithter awareness nor repentance for that. Rather, it seems, they were quite complacent with what they had. This was, more or less, the pan-Indian picture concerning the life of the masses of the middle class women.

THE CHANGED SCENE

We have thus presented in brief a profile of the traditional setting, referred to here as the reference framework of the study. It would be logical now to record the changed situation, that could be analysed and brought to bear on the problem. It could be assessed, in general, that the emergence of Indian women into active life outside home after Independence is a result of their partnership in revolution that culminated into India's freedom in 1947. Gandhiji's leadership and following him Jawaharlal Nehru's, both of whom championed the cause of women and at the same time felt sincerely that women must also work side by side with men, were reasons enough to initiate a new role the women would likely to assume or to play. Moreover

the Constitution of India has provided the women with legal capacity to rise to full status as a human being. Taking up out of home employment by the middle class Bengalee women is nothing but an outcome and utilisation of this opportunity.

The emerging life-situation acted as a new thrust on the womenfolk in general, initiating dynamism. The pressure ultimately ushered a set of change in them and also in the then existing social setting. The change was, so to say, positive and directional in nature. But before we go any further, at the outset, we must once more remember that change is a slow process, especially social change. So there is no point in expecting uniformity in its pattern of distribution. Moreover, diversity in human type does not allow individuals to respond to it equally. Hence, for all practical purposes, change can be equated with mosaic. Therefore, it is quite expected that change chould be established in a section of the sample, not in its entirity. The view of this section irrespective of its numerical strength, will go a long way in appreciating, evaluating and understanding the trends of change.

As already noted, it was customary to believe that women's place was within and around the hearth. If any woman was found employed in a job outside home it was immediately assumed that she had been at job to meet the bare economic impulses. But in reality what we could experience is that even during the short span of time, women, due to working alone, have been able to shake off much of their awkwardness. Not only that they are even commanding a definite place in the emergent social millieu. They are working certainly not due solely to economic reason, but there are some who took up jobs to satisfy their ego (*cf.* Table 2.11). A career, they believe, has its reward and also self-satisfaction.

Their capacity to earn has made them believe that they are not now an economic liability either of the family or of they society. But they do believe, and in fact it is, they had turned themselves into an economic asset of the family. Because they are, during the hour of need, shouldering solely the entire economic responsibility of family (*cf.* Table 3.4). It is generally, however, seen that they do supplement the overall family income in quest of a better home and a better living (*cf.* Table 3.4). Therefore, there is no denying the fact that in the field of economic activities of the family the newly emerging white collar women class is playing an important role, hitherto not known. This is a very crucial change that can be taken well note of in the context of operation of family life and activities.

At office desk, to make a room through the process of slow encroachment, they have really made a mark. The women engaged in jobs have very tactfully adapted themselves to the environment at office. It is almost an accepted fact now-a-days that they do not bother much for working side by side with their male colleagues; nor do they lag behind in taking active

part in other kind of activities, say, for example, trade unionism. Although in latter activities their role can definitely be considered a bit passive. This is, of course, so, irrespective of the type of occupation or profession in which they belong. But it must also be said that there are a handful of over enthusiastic women who play active roles in matters like this equally to men.

The study has adequately broght to relief that the working women, at least a section of them, do not want to identify their potentialities with any particular work situation or employment. They rather feel strongly that they can capably discharge duties assigned to other kind of jobs that are available. Majority of them further feel that they are not only capable of doing things properly but also can perform the assigned job as good as men. At any rate it could be appreciated that they are least liked to be underestimated. The survey clearly tells us that they are not only confident about the performance and discharge of the assigned duties but they do want to have equal opportunities with men to prove their competence in all possible walks of life, in every profession, and in all occupations. This is a very notable feature indeed. Notable is the self-reliance. This is again significant since the confidence of doing things equally with men reflects altogether a new set of world view, hitherto remained unthinkable for them.

This could be viewed as a new addition of another dimension in the emerging class of working women. Let us now turn our eyes towards home situation and try to estimate the trends of change that have been brought about at that front. If we carefully examine the various aspects of the home situation, series of change that have occurred owing to taking up wage work outside cannot escape our attention.

We may begin investigating into whether any change has taken place in the family structure and family size. It has already been recorded earlier that the frequency of nuclear family is predominant in our sample as against that of the joint family (*cf.* Table 3.1). But this factor really does not give us any ground for inferring upon any one-to one relationship. That is, to say, we cannot deduce definitely that nuclear family is prepondering owing to taking up employment. Nevertheless, we are perhaps in a position to trace an indirect relationship between nuclear family and women's employment. It may be worthwhile recollecting here that women's employment can well be considered as a precipitate process of the so-called urbanization and modernization. And it is a fact that nuclearity in family is one of the net products of urbanization. If we now consider the preponderance of nuclear family in our sample in this context there is adequate reason to believe that nuclearity of family might have some relationship with the phenomenon of women's working outside. Consequent upon this, there could be noted a reduction of size in the unit of family from large to medium, the average being 5.07.

Working women's position in family as well as among relatives has palpably become elevated owing to employment. They are not now considered a non-entity. From the state of parasitic existence, they emerged as individuals socially useful and economically important. It has been noted that their opinion and views are sought for and given due weight in sorting out problems of the family, be it nuclear or large joint family. They believe that being involved in extradomestic activities their range of abilities have been increased and by the help of which they can tackle and solve problems of different kinds at home more efficiently now.

Employment demands a minimum level of education. Women with education and employment do remain not simply women but become persons with personality. By virtue of this added quality they have developed a clear cut sense of liking and disliking. Even they are now giving vent to their views loudly on some items of domestic problems. Being exposed to interactions with male colleagues at the place of work they by appreciating the male qualities, develop an idea in the mind about who could be the possible mate. They are seen to exercise the preference about the selection of life partner. When the question of marriage comes in, it could be noted, a good number of them have become more progressive in their views and less biased about marriages other than normally sanctioned by the society. The working women in this category, although proportionately less, appear to be little influenced by traditional call but their mental orientation is more prepared than a typical housewife. They do not find any reason whatsoever why they should not enter into an unconditional marriage partnership.

Another aspect of change is in the pattern of sharing labour in running the household. In the event of working outside the traditional division of labour, *i.e.*, entirely looking after family for its smooth running by putting their labour, has been rearranged to meet the situation. The study revealed enough evidence to show that husbands of working women often share some of the task originally shouldered by the women (*cf.* 3.17). This sharing of domestic chroes by the husbands is, however, marginal. It goes without saying that one can not expect the same level of expertise from a man as a woman, for a woman has acquired it through regular practice. But a woman expects that a man can help according to his ability. In most of the families it could be seen that in spite of working outside the women do still shoulder most of the physical workload of the family. The real situation is husbands are regarded as assistants to wives or temporary stand-in-aid, but never as co-workers on equal terms. On the contrary at the domestic sphere, the working women continue to do things what they used to do earlier. The notable addition is that they are to shoulder additional responsibility of working outside. This working outside has changed their outlook as far as the division of labour at home is concerned. They are now trying to impose upon their husbands some of the domestic work to help save their

time and physical labour. And indeed they receive it more frequently. The most notable point in this regard as reported by some informants, is that some men have already realised that women should not be overburdened with dual responsibilities. In order to lessen their pressure of work, they on their own, extend help in domestic chores. Such attitude is always welcome.

Do the working women feel work really important? This is a question when analysed gives us much ground in understanding their changing world view. Contrary to the age old attitude, some 49 per cent of working women of our sample do really consider both the spheres of activities at home and outside equally important. Because they find pleasure in working outside and as such office work is no longer considered subsidiary to them. At the back of such pleasure, of course, the question that they are earning by dint of labour is much in their mind. This is one side of the coin. On the other side, again, they do not want to ignore duties in the family. This is because of the very realisation that family is their creation and joys and sorrows in the family life are but the ingredients of life. Of the working women we came across a few dogmatic persons who emphasised that outside work was more important than managing the home life. They are, of course, quite handful, come up to only 5 per cent of the whole.

We have already spoken about working women exercising preference in the matter of selecting life partner. Another preference they are trying to exercise is with regard to the choice of job. As already discussed adequately, there is no denying the fact that teaching is by far the most preferred of all the white collar service (*cf.* Table 2.17). Of the many reasons for preferring this profession the crucial ones are:

(*i*) women can maintain a closer touch with home life and utilize the experience as mother;
(*ii*) it gives them maximum opportunity to attend to household duties and responsibilities; and
(*iii*) it is a prestigious profession.

And working women's preference for teaching is not a matter to provoke thoughts when trying to understand the question of preference. The important feature that harps on the problem is generated by a section of working women who represent 19 per cent. They believe that a particular job, for example teaching, cannot be identified with the only abilities that working women have. They argue that it is below the dignity of any woman to have any job especially earmarked for them. Provided due opening and opportunity is given, they do not find any reason whatsoever that women would not be able to justify their merit in various fields of occupations in the same footing with men. They consider that while there might be certain selections in providing opportunities to women, the capabilities of women

in terms of delivering goods should not be underestimated at any cost, even knowing that feminity carries with it nobility and softness. The case is very simple for them. On the plea of sex they do not intend to compete in the field of job with handicap or reservation. They want to be treated as equals and not as weaklings. The question of equality and human rights comes in.

In any discussion on equality some more items trickles down. Among other things, house-keeping and the duties associated with it calls for attention. We have already talked about sharing of duties for maintaining domestic unit. It is another kind of maintenance not achieved through physical efforts but is operated upon through mental involvement mostly. In a domestic unit there could be problems, and indeed they are, that need solution. In the field of house-keeping, working women of today firmly believe that they must be consulted and their views should be sought for since the responsibility is more or less equal as far as managing of home is concerned. It is not only that, there is an undertone of feeling of intellectualism in handling suitably the domestic problems. With their changing world view they are convinced that the wisdom they have, if utilised and honoured, would go a long way in giving shape to many a crying problems.

The pulse of change could also be felt in another aspect of life situation. This is in the field of political activities. Some women have also become interested in it. The change may be traced if the views and ideas of the middle class working women regarding the participation and involvement of the women in political activities are also evaluated. Of the working women, 16 per cent respondants believe that political activities should not be reserved for men alone. They say although they are not directly associated in active politics, they share thoughts with men in office politics, politics at the state and national level. They emphatically declined to accept politics as male specific. The working women of this section think that there is no reason why a woman should not take active part in politics. They believe that economic and social problems stir women equally or perhaps more than men, since a good society helps them to live more freely and happily. They refused to believe that god created men with an extra or special appendage that would help taking part in politics. It is an open field and any one who have the ability, aptitude or efficiency can do very well, irrespective of sex.

From all these discussions one important feature comes into relief. It is true that a section of working women, although minor in terms of numerical strength is found to be self-conscious, self-assertive and confident, demanding equality with men in all spheres of life—be it at home or at outside world. Education, employment and interaction with people outside have opened their eyes to appreciate new vistas of life. And thus this torch-bearing section of working women is just striking a new line, placing a new note. Of course, they do not want to be mere duplicators or imitators of

men. They are trying to realise their own worth, rights and previleges, duties and responsibilities, both at home and in the task of nation building as well.

These are some of the aspects of change. These, on the whole, amply demonstrate the nature and extent of some aspects of change in the middle class working women. And, therefore, the first hypothesis that gainful employment outside home by the women brings forth a series of changes in their way of life may thus be considered accepted.

PATTERNS OF CONTINUITY

Despite the changes among a section of working women that we have just discussed, traditional customs are seen to prevail upon to shape the destinies of most of the middle class women. Society is usually slow to shake off its established customs, even if they appear irrational. And in matters relating to women, they appear to be almost sacrosanct and unshakable. The climax lies, however, in the fact that middle class women themselves are the disseminators of these customs. and they help perpetuating the same over generations. It is owing to this factor alone, that even though many women are employed, in our tradition bound culture old values are internalized and serve as a criterion for evaluation—for self and for society as well. They work, indeed, but prefer teaching. Teaching carries a high esteem in the eyes of society and so to the beholdeis.

It is true that educational, political, economic and social changes have concomitantly changed women's status, their roles and ways of life. But these could change their basic feminine character a little. They are essentially just that chip of the old block to which their mother or grandma belonged. Like them they also pine for bettermate and a cosier home. The difference that is there between the two counterparts is that while the latter could give undivided attention towards the domestic unit, the employed women have the attention divided between home and place of work. Indeed they work but they work for the family and that too from economic impulses. They work to support the family. Thus, it could be deciphered that the working women, on the whole never sought to sublimate or bypass the demands of family life. Rather, their homes and families have either come first or stand at per with work (*cf.* Table 3.19). This role is very significant, as far as the art of maintaining a stable family life and there-by a stable society is concerned.

They have fully recognised the importance of this role as a centripetal force in the family structure. This in turn has made them feel that it is exclusively their duty to look after the household chores and run the home smoothly. Not only that but they also do not like to be helped by male members in all the domestic chores. Even armed with some domestic appliances they, alike their older counterparts, still today believe in a

subservient position to their husbands. Although sounds ironic, the reality of the fact is that they prefer most to remain subordinate to their housbands.

That family matter remains uppermost in their mind becomes apparent in any discussion about their role as mother. Although nuclear form of family bears indirect relation with women's employment the study adequately brings out the fact that mothers even now prefer joint family. Of many reasons for such an attachment towards joint family the factor of child care crowns all.

Leaving aside the family life we find continuity of traditionality even if we take up the issue of marriage—the doorstep to acquire a family. It has already been noted that about 60 per cent women in our study are already married while women in the order of 40 per cent remain yet to marry. In spite of working outside majority of these unmarried women are willing to acquire a family of their own (*cf.* Table 3.7). This automatically points to the fact that employment does not stand in the way of having a family life. The urge for a family is rather a normal expectation.

Again, a fairly large section of the working women both married and unmarried, is seen to be conservative enough with regard to marriage. A major section has shown strong preference for the traditional way of sacramental marriage (*cf.* Table 3.9). The traditional rule of marriage in turn helps maintaining the social boundary of caste, creed and religion. Therefore, majority of the marriages in our sample were solemnised according to the society's prescribed marriage rules. The underlying reasons for supporting this type of marriages are threefold:

(*i*) conventional and socially sanctioned;
(*ii*) bearing aesthetic value; and
(*iii*) affirms religious bondage between husband and wife.

Since the ethics and cultural norms of the middle class are deeply rooted into tradition according to our second hypothesis there would remain some items of cultural continuities. And this has been, as just gathered, bourne out in the study.

MODE OF ADJUSTMENT

After discussing change and continuity the question of adjustment knocks at the door. It has already been argued upon that working women have to play dual roles, if not multiple. They are thus subjected to dual responsibilities of home and work. The study bears out the fact that although there are many problems in adjustment the working women have willingly accepted their two responsibilities, one as workers and the other as home-makers. Their problem that calls for attention is how to harmonize the two.

Admittedly, indeed, harmonisation is a must to maintain an equilibrium. In this regard Kapur (1970) enlightens us, "To be a successful wife is a career in itself, and if a woman choose another career she has to make reconciliations between the two roles in order to bring about harmony within itself." The empirical findings of the present study also have ably demonstrated that the middle class working women of Calcutta, to the tune of 70.5 per cent, have been able to maintain an admirable balance between the two, as workers and home-makers.

The two roles of working women are, however, entangled and sometimes apt to create some sort of disequilibrium. And this could be of any magnitude, depending on individual set up and situation.

But the material at our disposal adequately shows that the working women have been able to save the situation successfully by fitting themselves into the interestices.

Whatever might be the upheavels in life, the middle class women have the realisation that only a stable family could give them security. The security is a much cherished thing in the life of any one. They derive among others mental strength from the very sense of security. This, in turn, helps them securing benefit as well as pleasure from work. So they have to be loyal to both ends of life, at home and at work. And evidently they are. Their sincerity, dilligence, alertness and aptness, and on the top of them eagerness help them in doing the work successfully and satisfactorily. They receive help from members of the family, not to speak of husband, in solving domestic chores. It is, however, not in every occasion that they do receive help spontaneously but at times cooperation from family members is demanded whenever it is necessary. Furthermore, it could be appreciated that seeking help and cooperation is not an unilateral behaviour but bilateral. In the matter of looking after and caring of children they obtain help from near and dear ones. When, however, there is no possibility of being helped by close dependable relatives mostly due to absence or non-existence, the affairs of children are managed with the help of hired persons.

The middle class working women, though conditioned by traditions, customs and some such other social conditions are confronted with many kinds of changes as a result of education and employment. The working women of today have necessarily acquired a multitude of new functions, while retaining side by side quite a few old ones. From all these facts and figures, there is no hesitation to state that the changes in the way of life of the middle class working women have been remarkable but not indeed revolutionary.

The middle class women have, thus, been able to retain viably their instrinsic love for the home, the children and family. And retaining this

in situ, they have effectively and necessarily mingled in it their strong determination to play an admirably vital role in making an appropriate socio-economic structure of modern India.

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APPENDIX

List of Organisations wherefrom data were collected

1. All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health
   110 Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta-73.
2. Anthropological Survey of India
   27 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta-16
3. Archacological Survey of India
   27 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta-16
4. Bethune Collegiate School
   181 Bidhan Sarani, Calcutta-6
5. Bethune College
   181 Bidhan Sarani, Calcutta-6
6. Botanical Survey of India
   (*a*) Botanical Garden, Howrah-3
   (*b*) 1 Sudder Street, Calcutta-13
7. Civil Defence, Department of Home, Government of West Bengal
   27 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta-16
8. Cholera Research Centre
   3 Kyd Street, Calcutta-16
9. Central Council for Research in Indian Medicine and Homeopathy,
   118 Raja Rammohan Roy Sarani, Calcutta-9
10. Central Telegraph Office
    8 Red Cross Place, Calcutta-1
11. Dairy Development Directorate, Government of West Bengal
    Writers Building, Calcutta-1
12. Directorate of Jute Development, Government of India
    234/4 Acharya Jagadish Bose Road, Calcutta-20
13. Directorate of Rationing, Government of West Bengal, Rationing Offices
    (*a*) Jadavpore-40 A South End Park, Calcutta-29
    (*b*) Bhowanipore-52 B Kali Temple Road, Calcuttp-26
14. Directorate of Ordnance Factories, Government of India
    6 Esplande East, Calcutta-69
15. Education Directorate, Government of West Bengal
    Writers Building, Calcutta-1
16. Food Corporation of India
    11/A Mirza Galib Street, Calcutta-16
17. Food & Supplies Department, Government of West Bengal
    11/A Mirza Galib Street, Calcutta-16
18. Geological Survey of India, Government of India,
    (*a*) 27 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta-16
    (*b*) 4 Chowringhee Lane, Calcutta-16
    (*c*) 29 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta-16
    (*d*) 5 Middleton Street, Calcutta-16

19. Gokhale Memorial Girls' School & College
    1/1 Haris Mukherjee Road, Calcutta-20
20. Government of India Press
    1 Temple Street, Calcutta-13
21. Health Service Directorate, Government of West Bengal
    (*a*) Writers Building, Calcutta-1
    (*b*) 16 India Exchange Place Extension, Calcutta-12
22. Hoechst Pharmaceuticals Ltd
    6 Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Calcutta-13
23. Income Tax Department West Bengal
    (*a*) 8/2 Esplanade East, Calcutta-69
    (*b*) 3 Government Place West, Calcutta-1
    (*c*) 10 Middleton Row, Calcutta-16
24. Indian Institute of Social Welfare & Business Management
    3 Madan Mohan Street, Calcutta-7
25. Indian Museum
    27 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta-16
26. Indian Oil Corporation
    (*a*) 1 Shakespeare Sarani, Calcutta 71
    (*b*) 46 C Chowringhes Road, Calcutta-71
27. Lady Brabourne College
    P 1/2 Surawardy Avenue, Calcutta-17
28. Life Insurance Corporation of India
    (*a*) Hindusthan Building, 4 Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta-72
    (*b*) Hindusthan Building Annexe, 4 Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta-72
    (*c*) 15 Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta-72
29. Marshall Sons & Co Ltd
    75 C Park Street, Calcutta-16
30. National Insurance Co. Ltd.
    46 C Chowringhee Road, Calcutta-71
31. National Library
    Belvedere, Calcutta-27
32. National Mineral Development Corporation
    13 Camac Street, Calcutta-17
33. Office of the Accountant General, West Bengal
    Treasury Building, Calcutta-1
34. Office of the Joint Chief Controller of Imports & Exports
    4 Esplanade East, Calcutta-69
35. Office of the Rent Controller, Government of West Bengal
    2 & 3 Kiran Sankar Roy Road, Calcutta-1
36. Panchayet Deptt. Govt. Of West Bengal.
    11 A Kiran Sankar Roy Road, Calcutta-1
37. Refugee, Relief and Rehabilitation Directorate, Government of West Bengal,
    10 Camac Street, Calcutta-17
38. Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Calcutta University
    92 Acharya Prafulla Chandra Road, Calcutta-9

39. Sarojini Naidu College for Women
30 Jessore Road, Calcutta-28

40. South Point High School
82/7A Ballygunge Place, Calcutta-19

41. State Bank of India
(*a*) 1 Strand Road, Calcutta-1
(*b*) 43 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta-71
(*c*) 1 Middleton Street, Calcutta-71

42. The Titaghur Paper Mills Co. Ltd.
Chartered Bank Buildings, Calcutta-1

43. Union Carbide Ltd
1 Middleton Street, Calcutta-71

44. University College of Science, Calcutta University
35 Ballygunge Circular Road, Calcutta-19
(*a*) Department of Anthropology
(*b*) Department of Bio-Chemistry
(*c*) Department of Botany
(*d*) Department of Geography
(*e*) Department of Mathematics
(*f*) Department of Statistics

45. Victoria Institution
78.B Acharya Prafulla Chandra Road, Calcutta-9

46. Zoological Survey of India,
27 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta-16

47. West Bengal State Electricity Board
13 Camac Street, Calcutta-17

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Besides she has especially developed a deep interest in human palaeontology and palaeoanthropology. She is also preparing manuscripts of her ensuing book. "Facts and Theories of Human Evolution."

She has to her credit more than a dozen research papers, published in various professional journals.